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LAST ESSAYS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR



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CHARLES I AND CROMWELL

(Rupert Hart-Davis)



VICTORIAN ENGLAND: PORTRAIT OF AN AGE

(Oxford University Press)



THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITAIN

(Collins)

LAST ESSAYS

G. M. YOUNG

*Not panting after growing beauties, so,
I shall ebbe out with them, who home-ward goe.*

Donne



LONDON

RUPERT HART-DAVIS

1950

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SOCIIS
CONSOCIUS

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE occasions which called forth these essays and addresses are detailed in the footnotes. I desire to make my acknowledgments to the Oxford University Press, the Edinburgh University Press, Messrs Macmillan & Co, Ltd, Messrs B. T. Batsford, Ltd, and The Sylvan Press; also to the editors of *The Times Literary Supplement*, the *Listener*, *Time and Tide*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Observer* and the *Political Quarterly*, each of whom has printed one or more of them.

G. M. Y.

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INTRODUCTION

I HAVE called this collection by the name *Last Essays*, because it concludes, I think, all that I have to say in that form. But though the subjects are diverse, I should like the several papers to be read together as a book. Every one of us lives in a landscape of his own, and whether at any moment he is looking north or south, or east or west, the landscape remains the same: part visible, part remembered.

My landscape is historic. But, as I have said often enough in this book, what matters most in history is not what happened, but what people said about it when it was happening—about it, and round about it, because, after all, very little of any man's time is spent in talking about the things that get into the history books. But it is the little, unnoticed, things that make up 'the endowment of the age' and so in the long run settle whether history shall move this way or that. Hence follows the rule which I always try to observe: 'Go on reading till you can hear people talking.' And as in this art Scott is the master of us all, Scott is the figure in the foreground of my landscape. If Benedetto Croce is visible not far off, the reason is that Croce—in the book, at least, under my notice here—is the perfect exemplar of how history should not be approached, because, so approached, it will never be comprehended.

'I understand that,' someone may say: 'I see that, with your make-up, you can no more help being

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historical than a painter can help being pictorial. But I am otherwise disposed, and how do you prove that what is no doubt a pleasant exercise for you is a necessary discipline for me?' My answer is to be found in the papers called *Continuity* and *At the Bar of History*, more especially in their closing sentences. I often feel that we are standing just before the dawn of a Second Renaissance which will need history in order to understand the world with which it will have to deal, just as the First Renaissance had to go to the Classics to find the right way of saying all the new things that had to be said. If I were asked, 'Who of all men did most to shape the English mind, to determine the English attitude to things?' I think I might answer, Richard Hooker. And what should we know of Hooker, how far would his influence have radiated, how long persisted, if he had had no better English at his command than Reginald Pecock? But it was from the ancients that Hooker learnt how to use his language. And, in another way, doubtless, but in the same degree, we must learn from the historians how to use our observations if we are to count for all we are worth in the shaping of that European mind which seems painfully to be coming to birth, or re-birth, to-day.

But when we have traced that 'European mind' to the doorstep, the bar, the common-room, or, maybe, the queue, we must acknowledge that its English variety is a curiously inarticulate mind, very clumsy and uncertain in its utterance, unable to manage or use the immense wealth of language which it possesses but cannot be said to enjoy. As a boy I had often speculated about the future of our speech. I knew how Sanskrit broke up into Primary Prākritis, and they into Secondary, until you got

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down to Romany: or Latin branched out into all the varieties of Romance. What I expected was—a Common Speech, mainly American, like the Greek of the Hellenistic monarchies, with certain well-marked variations, Anglo-Indian for example, and Anglo-Irish, which I always associated with the Sicilian of Theocritus. But what I fondly fancied was, that at the centre, in the old triangle, Oxford Cambridge and Westminster, there would remain the Attic of England, which nobody but an Englishman could speak, and that the Outliers would come over to learn, if learn they could, when to say *shall* and when to say *will*. Like other fancies this, too, has gone down the paths of sleep. But when I found that certain malignant spirits were proposing to create an artificial Common Language, at once the inversion and the perversion of our natural speech, I felt, if I could do no more, I could at least throw myself across their path, and so I wrote the essay on Basic.

The relations of speech-in-itself and thought-in-itself I leave to the logicians. What concerns me is the relation of speech to action by way of that unceasing conversation or debate which, by my doctrine, is the essential matter of history. And when I had at last succeeded in saying on this theme what I had long been trying to say, I found that I had also, and by the way, added one to the already innumerable definitions of style.

The final cause of speech is to get an idea as exactly as possible out of one mind into another. Its formal cause therefore is such choice and disposition of words as will achieve this end most economically.

Idea is not the happiest word, but we have no other which includes the thought, the picture, and the

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feeling. And with that proviso, or allowance, I am prepared to make the definition good against all comers. Meantime, what I mean by *economical* two examples will show. One, from Berkeley,

The worst effect of the Reformation was the rescuing wicked men from the darkness which had kept them in awe.

The other, from Ruskin,

The masses of black weed separating and disappearing gradually, in knots of heaving shoal, under the advance of the steady tide,

which I admire the more, perhaps, because it is in a manner which I am incapable even of approaching, much less of emulating.

But I noticed, as I was growing up, that while I had a pretty clear idea of what was good verse and what was bad (and on the whole my judgments have persisted into later life), and while I could enjoy, even to enchantment, the pictorial prose of Ruskin, the tremendous antitheses of Tacitus, or the far-reaching irony of Gibbon, for the Middle Harmony, where, my preceptors told me, the virtue of good prose lies, I had no ear and no taste. And in this darkness, this numbness of response, I think I might have remained if I had not read the Letters of Erasmus. There for the first time I realized what makes good prose: not colour, not eloquence, not glamour or cry or thrill: but exactness, economy, form: and that I knew already was what the ancients thought. I had observed, too, that ancient criticism of poetry was for the most part unsatisfying, so much so as to leave one asking if the critics really enjoyed it as we do. But their criticism of prose was commonly most apt, the reason being, I saw, that while

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they were not trying to make poets, they were trying to make—‘orators’ they would have said—but the word *orator* was wide and suggestive enough to cover everybody from an ambassador to a doctor who had to use prose seriously and practically. Their watchword in fact was ‘I have shown you how it is done—now go and do it yourselves.’ So the essay on Classical Criticism, in a way, rounds off my *credo*, because in any people professing to be self-governed, good speech, delivered in the Middle Harmony, must be deemed the first political art. Is it unattainable? That fancy of mine, started long ago by Newman, will not be put to sleep, that if we set our minds to it we might be the Attica of the New Monarchies, known everywhere by our style, by the integrity of our thinking as much as by the balanced exactness of our speech.

And not by those things only. I share the common belief that some form of European union is desirable, and, unless it is prevented by some violent impact from the East, is indeed inevitable. Then what is our part in such a union, what particular virtue of our own can we contribute, first to the making and thereafter to the maintaining of this new order? I am always reluctant to cite the Lessons of History, because the first lesson of history, and it may well be the last, is that you never know what is coming next. But there is such a thing as tracing the curve, and when I try to trace our own, what strikes me is the uninterrupted persistence, and development, of the West-Saxon doctrine of the King in his Shires. It came through the Danish invasions: it came through the Norman Conquest, and the Civil Wars: and I have often thought that while I should be hard put to it to explain Western Union or the Statute of

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Westminster to Scipio or Trajan, I should have no difficulty in making it clear to King Alfred. Now, the essence of this doctrine is, that everyone has at the same time a *patria loci*, a *patria juris*, with a *patria morum* over all; and if anyone cares to work out its implications, he will I think have gone some way to understand how the New West, Hesperia, may come into being: must come, indeed, if that being is to be effectual. And the essay on the Origin of Wessex and the three Pastoral Pieces which follow may help to enliven his imagination on the journey.

The paper on Government was conceived in a different, and a darker, mood. 'Suppose', I said, 'what is by no means inconceivable, that England breaks under the burden she has taken upon herself: what account could I give posterity of the institutions under which she was once so powerful, so formidable, and on the whole so happy?' Under which? Within which is perhaps better, because they were not imposed, but self-created by that unceasing process of experiment and popular debate which in that paper I tried to trace. Now I do greatly doubt whether that process can be much further continued within its traditional framework, simply because both the substance and the language of debate are rising or drifting beyond the reach and comprehension of ordinary minds. What is impending, to give an ugly thing the ugliest possible name, is a techno-bureaucracy in the service of an immensely powerful government. And when I ask myself—what will come through this time? the only answers I can see are—either nothing: the curve has been broken at last: or else, a new Liberalism reformulated to meet the circumstances and requirements of an impoverished state, nominally equalitarian, but in fact authoritarian to a

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degree which our ancestors, indeed our fathers, could barely have conceived.

Just ten years ago I wrote:

Between, on the one side, the compactness of party organization made necessary by the vast size of a modern electorate, and, on the other, the technical intricacies of modern administration, the area of well-informed discussion is gradually contracting, and those who are best qualified, by education or experience, to occupy it, are gradually losing the weight they ought to carry in a well-balanced constitution. . . . I cannot conceal from myself that among them there does exist, here in England, today, something of the same indolence and disaffection as elsewhere has opened the way to calamity and the overthrow of free institutions. To re-engage their interest and provide them with a field of useful and productive work seems to me a task to which our more enlightened statesmanship might well lend itself.

I received a message from the Ministry of Information that unless I would rewrite this paragraph, the Appropriate Authority would not allow my book to be exported to—Turkey. Why Turkey, Heaven only knows: that any words of mine should put ideas into the heads of the sturdy Anatolian peasantry is indeed a solemn thought. But I repeat it now because I believe that the first, most urgent, task of the New Liberalism—by whatever name it may call itself—will be to make such changes in our Parliamentary institutions as will increase the efficiency of Parliament as a place of debate, and so make it a more attractive place to the independent, the experienced, the knowledgeable man: in a word, to give the Shires, the People in Parliament, their proper weight against the King, the Ministers in Council. And the two essays on Victorian Liberalism and the Happy Family of 1860 may be read as footnotes to the more substantial paper on Government, one showing what

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Liberalism was; the other, what it felt like to live under a liberal constitution.

I can hardly claim that the papers on Pushkin, Thackeray, and Gabriel Harvey are integral to the general purpose of this collection. One I wrote for the love of Russia (difficult to keep burning but still unquenched): one, to make up my mind about Thackeray: and the third in the hope, so far unfulfilled, of dispelling one of those myths which are the plague of history. But Aubrey does belong, because I feel fairly sure that if ever, as a people, we are to acquire the historic eye, it is with what happened here and what people said about it that we must begin, and there Aubrey with his flashes of divination is, hardly perhaps our safest guide, but certainly one of our most entertaining companions. And Hardy? To-day I feel even more surely and sadly than I did when I was making my selection, and waiting for the war to begin, that he is the last great poet who will ever write in the ancient music of England.

If the Deathless could weep in dole for the dying,
The Muses might mourn for the maker Naevius.
For sith he has passed to the place of pining
At Rome they have forgotten Latin to speken.

April, 1950

G. M. Y.

SCOTT AND THE HISTORIANS¹

WRITING of Gibbon and his early devotion to the *Arabian Nights* I said, 'The work of his manhood is shot with a child's visions of grave and bearded Sultans who only smiled on the day of battle, the sword of Alp Arslan, the mace of Mahmoud, "Imaus, and Caf, and Altai, and the Golden Mountains, and the Girdle of the Earth." To the Christian Middle Ages his imagination had no such key. No place in the world demands historic explanation so insistently as Venice. He passed through it with indifference and something like disgust. Gibbon's incomprehension of Mediaeval Europe is the measure of what history owes to Scott.'

Among Scott's letters there is one dated 1806 and addressed to Lord Dalkeith, which, to the student of history and the writing of history, is of quite extraordinary interest, because Scott, without in the least realizing that he was doing anything out of the common, has here furnished the social historian with an almost perfect example of method and presentation. The theme is the depopulation of the Southern Uplands between the Union of the Crowns and the middle of the eighteenth century, and there can hardly be one element, one operating cause, for which Scott has not allowed, to which he has not assigned due weight, in a letter only four or five pages long, but written with that full ease which gives the

¹ A lecture given in the University of Edinburgh under the auspices of the Sir Walter Scott Memorial Foundation (1947) and later reprinted in *Sir Walter Scott Lectures* (Edinburgh University Press)

assurance of a vast reserve of knowledge behind every word. How had he come by it?

In his essay on Scott, written in 1863—that is, just a generation after Scott's death—Walter Bagehot let fall one highly suggestive observation. Grote, he said, had nowhere been more successful than in his attempt to derive from Homeric poetry a consistent account of Homeric society; and Scott's poetry was essentially a modernized version of the traditional poetry which his youth had been spent in collecting. But such poetry, Bagehot goes on, is 'a sensible thing, dealing with incidents which have a form and a body and a prosaic consistence'. He quotes from *The Lady of the Lake*:

Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I mark'd thee send delighted eye,
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:
Those fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread,
For fatten'd steer or household bread;
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
'To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.'
Ay, by my soul! While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall with strong hand redeem his share.

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And Bagehot comments that not in a set treatise could the relations of Highlander and Lowlander be more aptly described. But they are described, you see, in such words as come naturally to the lips of a man who thinks in terms of flocks and herds: the man, that is to say, who, in that letter to Lord Dalkeith, wrote the history of the depopulation in the language of people who remembered twenty chimneys smoking where now there were none, and who reckoned time from the waeiful year when seven Scotts of the Forest lost their land.

✓ It was from his own Border country and its traditions that Scott found his way into the past. As he says himself, 'He that traverses these peaceful glens and hills *must* refer his researches to antiquity.' Without antiquity, ruin and battlefield and the very line of demarcation

Far in the distant Cheviot blue

are meaningless to the eye and say nothing to the imagination. With many minds this compulsion to make the place speak and tell its story seems to be a thing given by nature, and so it was with Scott. I have sometimes tried to imagine him translated to England, that one year's sojourn in Bath prolonged to ten, and I have asked myself what shape his genius would have taken. He might, perhaps, have realized his whimsical ambition to be a dean. He would have published the Muniments of the Chapter House and restored the North Transept to his own design—and the subsequent fury of John Ruskin—and written one or two novels on the humours of life as seen from the Cathedral Close, which might have been as interesting as *Columella* or *The Spiritual Quixote*—perhaps rather more. Because it is, I think,

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clear from *St. Ronan's Well* and the Introduction to the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, and above all from that exquisitely sympathetic piece, the humours of the Marquis de Vieuxbois, at the beginning of *Quentin Durward*, that Scott had it in him to be a novelist of contemporary life: to fill that rather puzzling gap between Fielding and Sterne on one side, and Dickens and Thackeray on the other, across which Miss Austen walks so daintily and so confidently on a path which is all her own. But the truth is, it is impossible to imagine Scott as anything but a Borderer, imbued from infancy with that sense of contrast, that feeling of something beyond, something mysteriously and magnetically different, which thrills us when Di Vernon points to Hawkesmoor Crag eighteen miles away, in Scotland, and Darsie Latimer walks by Solway and looks across the water, to England.

A French critic once distinguished the French from the English novel thus: that the French writer sets conventional characters in original situations, while the English writer sets original characters in conventional situations. With that oracular utterance in your mind read again the sixth chapter of *Rob Roy*. Here, besides the hero, who is also the narrator, you encounter three full-drawn characters, Rashleigh, Di Vernon, and Andrew Fairservice; six adequately sketched in, Sir Hildebrand and his sons; with a tiny, but delightful, conversation-piece thrown in for good measure: old Martha, the housekeeper, having her sister's children to stay in the holidays and feeding them on berries from Andrew's garden. But go on. The hunting scenes which follow carry us to Inglewood Place and the old non-juror who has taken the oaths for the common good, that is,

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for the enforcement of the Game Laws: and his clerk, Jobson, the Protestant zealot—with a passing glance at the Mayor of Newcastle, who, for adequate reasons, was more partial to poachers than to sportsmen. Here in a very few pages Scott has given us a complete view of the conflict of Jacobite and Hanoverian as it was really felt in a Northumbrian Manor House in sight of Hawkesmoor Crag, eighteen miles from Scotland, over a range of characters, gross and subtle, fervent and apathetic, which covers the whole distance from Diana to Rashleigh. If it be complained that Scott might have given the Hanoverian cause a rather more stimulating representative than the amiable Francis, the answer is, first, that Francis is the hero, and Scott's heroes have nothing to do except to be amiable; and second, that, of all causes for which men have fought and lied, the Protestant succession as by law established was surely the least inspiring. It is characteristic of Scott that the only Hanoverian statesman he brings on the scene is a Highlander, a Campbell—the Duke of Argyll: and it is another Campbell 'in a plain black dress with *couteau de chasse*' who winds up the tale of the Stuarts and dismisses the exile in peace and for ever.

I am building up by instance and example my conception of Scott as the founder of a new and historic school, and here let me interpose one word of caution. We are so accustomed to regard Scott as the central figure in the Romantic Movement (if you think of it as a European movement I believe the word 'central' is justified), and we are so accustomed to think of the Middle Ages as the Ages of Romance, that when we go over the list of Scott's writings we are surprised to notice how rarely he

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goes behind the Reformation, and one must add, with how little profit. Our positive knowledge, our popular knowledge, of the Middle Ages would have been no less if Scott had laid down his pen at the last page of *The Heart of Midlothian* and resumed it only to write *Redgauntlet*. *Ivanhoe* is one of the best stories ever written, but for all it has to tell us of England in the reign of Richard I it might be inscribed 'Scene—a forest. Time—as you like it', with a Saxon virago calling on Prussian deities in the idiom of Macpherson. Indeed, I am not sure that Scott did not give a lasting distortion to our conception of mediaeval history, by his fancy that Norman and Saxon persisted as consciously hostile races. It was from Scott, I suspect, that Thierry drew his notion that Becket's cause was the cause of the Saxon against the Norman; and the even more remarkable belief of a French visitor, whose name I have forgotten, that in the England of 1840 no one was allowed to own a horse unless he could prove his Norman descent. That is not the only surviving fancy which the student of popular belief can trace to Scott. I once observed two commercial travellers contemplating the Abbey ruins from a window of the Angel at Bury St. Edmunds. 'It is,' said the more articulate of the two, 'it is an interesting thought to think how many people were walled up alive in those old walls in ancient days.' So much for *Marmion*.

But it is one of the most curious paradoxes of our literary history that the Middle Ages in England ceased to interest the educated intelligence just about the time when they began to lay hold on the educated fancy. For two generations or something more our mediaeval learning had been a thing to wonder at.

Hickes and Dugdale, Hearne and Wharton, Madox and Rymer really deserve to stand by the side of the great Benedictines, or the giants of the classical Renaissance. Then suddenly it all collapsed under the weight of rational disdain. The tide which had borne these splendid argosies of learning, the *Monasticon* and the *Foedera*, turned and ran backwards, leaving the vessels aground and their freights undischarged. But simultaneously the Middle Ages became romantic, and from this unblessed union of ignorance and fascination came, in due course, Strawberry Hill, *The Castle of Otranto*, Ossian, Mrs. Radcliffe, and, with sorrow we must add, *Count Robert of Paris* and the Vehmgericht in *Anne of Geierstein*. But, when the revival came, the whole educated world was, as we might say, conditioned to read its documents as Scott would have read them, and so to see the mediaeval world, not as a pageant, but as a social structure where all, high or low, are linked together by the same customary law. Thus it came about that Bagehot's saying might be inverted: not in a work of fiction now do we expect such vivid pictures of social relations as we find in historical treatises, in Maitland's *Domesday and Beyond*, in the prefaces to the successive volumes of the Selden Society, or in those books whose names will always be a renewal of grief to those who remember Eileen Power.

Let me give an example from those fascinating vignettes of old English life, the *Inquests in Proof of Age*. Martin the Miller aged sixty years or upwards avers that he was crossing the churchyard on the Vigil of St. Crispin, in the third year of our Lord the King that now is, when he saw a christening party and they told him it was Henry's son. John atte Townsend says that Henry's daughter Catherine came running

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out of her chamber to tell him she had a brother, for which she gave thanks to God. William Weaver was hunting the fox that day with Henry, when a man ran up and said, 'Sir, will you hear the news?' and he said, 'Fair friend, what news?' and the man said, 'Sir, there is a son born in your house,' and Henry gave him forty pence. Asked by the court how he comes to remember the date so well, he says his cousin was married that morning, and after the wedding there was a feast, and after the feast there was a fray, and 'I was fined sixpence in the King's court for breaking my fellow's head.' Well, that is the Middle Ages. ¶ It is a world where everybody is, we may say, interested in everybody else, and may be required to declare his interest; everybody knows something about everybody else and may be required to divulge his knowledge. ¶

¶ To show Scott's originality and mastery in this field, take a passage from one of his poorest works, *The Monastery*, where he is describing the state of the church tenants on the eve of the Reformation. He dwells on the superior skill of those protected holders of monastic land, and, though doubtless in humble measure, their greater wealth. They are better informed, better fed, more independent, than their neighbours. From the kindly monks the boy of talent might get some learning, while the fathers of the hamlet, having more time for reflection as well as stronger motives for improving their properties, bore amongst their neighbours the character of shrewd, intelligent men who dreaded nothing more than to be involved in the feuds of secular landlords. ¶

Here you have, it seems to me, a new type coming into existence, the result of certain peculiar circumstances which could exist only in a border

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country remote from the control of the Crown. Pacific but not untrained in arms; not to be trodden on with impunity; acquainted with book learning but skilful in husbandry, hard living but comfortable, independent and not without a pleasing sense of their own superiority to their neighbours. And thus, or somehow thus, I think, is how the commons of Scotland do present themselves to a southern eye. They are not a yeomanry, open-handed and careless; they are a true peasantry, and one which, we all know, has exercised a profound influence in the development of our civilization throughout the world.

Now, to the historian the evolution of types like that is always a matter of great interest. In England the Reformation created a gentry. In Scotland it created a peasantry. Why? Well, Scott, it seems to me, has in these pages gone far to give an answer—whether it is the right answer I do not know, and I do not think it very much matters. What does matter is that he has gone the right way to find it—by tracing causes back until you find yourself among the good folk of Kennaquhair, and learn what you could never have guessed yourself—that while it was a venial sin to borrow one of the King's good deer, a heavy penance followed the sin of 'start and overloup', that is, of following the moss-troopers on a foray to Cumberland, and so inviting reprisals on the lands of St. Mary. But of 'start and overloup' we in the South knew nothing. We were much too well governed, much too frequently and impartially hanged. The lack of historic memory has often been noticed as an English characteristic. But generations of firm government had left us with nothing to remember. You know how in *Woodstock* and *Peveril* Scott labours to make

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something happen, and what a poor business it all ends in. He was writing of a country where nothing ever did happen; the police saw to that. Feuds that in Scotland would have decimated the countryside were here brought promptly to a stop by the tything man, white rod in hand, telling the parties to go home and behave, or they would find themselves in Star Chamber.

Now was that the reason why, when the commons of Scotland crossed the Tweed in defence of the Covenant, the commons of England, to put it mildly, had one good look at them and decided to go home, while the House of Lords hurriedly passed a sessional order that the new-comers should henceforth be referred to as 'our brethren' (not, as hitherto, 'those lousy Scots')? Well, it may have been. I leave it to the historians to say.

I have just let slip once or twice the word 'romantic'. You know what a dangerous lure that word is to those of us who concern ourselves with the history of opinion, of feeling, or of taste. And no one can ever pronounce it without recalling the exquisite scholarship which Logan Pearsall Smith devoted to its history. You remember the line of descent as he established it. First of all it means 'like the fables of chivalry in *lingua romanica*, or their later imitations'. Then, by a swift turn, 'like the landscape of such stories'. To Aubrey and Evelyn, Salisbury Plain is romantic, partly because there are shepherdesses there, and partly because old men had seen Philip Sidney riding in Vernditch chase, and sometimes reining in his horse to capture and write down some new felicity for his *Arcadia*. To Pepys, Windsor is 'the most romantique castle' in the world.

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And Addison, viewing the place of the Magdalen's penance amongst the rocks and mountains of Southern France, writes, 'It is so romantic a scene, that it has always probably given occasion to such chimerical relations.' That is the eighteenth century, the century of reason bidding its little pupils not to be fanciful, and, of course, Addison was a Whig. Did you hear an echo from the Western Islands? 'Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the Plain of Marathon or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona.' Johnson was a Tory. Between Addison and Johnson the conception, as it were, had taken charge of itself: it was beginning to spread its glamour over sea and land, and, gathering up the sentiment which such scenes were now permitted to evoke, it returned to literature, enriching and enriched.

I must not linger even on the outskirts of this illimitable theme. But I should like to point out that romance, being in its origin a local sentiment, gave a new significance to place, to the scene of action, and (it was Scott who first applied the incoming craft of local description to the composition of history. To the new school the question, 'Where did it happen?' would be quite as important as, 'How did it happen?' Indeed, the two are hardly to be separated.) And in his narrative of Drumclog and the victory of the Covenanters over the King's Guards, Scott set an example and a standard which some of his successors, professed historians, may have reached, but none, I think, has ever surpassed. And

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not the scene only, but, to use a word which was coming into fashion when Scott was a boy, the scenery of action can now be transferred to the canvas. Macaulay was far too Augustan to share the annual raptures of clerks and milliners at Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond. But he cannot help himself. At Killiecrankie he must write about 'the sound, so musical to modern ears, of the river brawling round the mossy rocks and among the smooth pebbles, the dark masses of crag and verdure worthy of the pencil of Wilson, the fantastic peaks bathed, at sunrise and sunset, with light rich as that which glows on the canvass of Claude'.

Now where does that come from? I think the seed was lodged, in the most capacious memory ever given to mortal man, by Julia Mannering, because this is how she writes of Cumberland to her 'dearest Matilda', in the chapter where, in passing, I think you first encounter that 'genius for friendship' without which no obituary is complete. She writes, 'If India be the land of magic, this is the country of romance. The scenery is such as nature brings together in her sublimest moods;—sounding cataracts—hills which rear their scathed heads to the sky—lakes, that, winding up the shadowy valleys, lead at every turn to yet more romantic recesses—rocks which catch the clouds of heaven. All the wildness of Salvator here, and there the fairy scenes of Claude.' Macaulay writes better than Julia Mannering, I grant you, but the staple of both passages, you see, is the same—that early romantic picturesque which Scott, who learned it from Mrs. Radcliffe, wove into the texture of history.

| Scott, you remember, was mature in years when

he embarked on this business of romantic fiction. He did not need to search for incident or character, he had only to dip and draw, and those raids into Liddesdale, year after year repeated, had furnished him with a good store of both. But compare him with Dickens. You feel, I think, that, with Scott, observation and invention are under a certain control, the control of a mind trained to disengage the relevant from the incidental, and the essential from the local: to weigh testimonies, to balance probabilities, to estimate the force of motives among all sorts and conditions of men. In a word it is the mind of a lawyer, a lawyer interested not so much in the higher branches of his science as in the human spectacle which is forever unrolling before the lawyer's eye, and which it is the business of the lawyer to reduce to order.

But would those two things—the equipment and the discipline—be enough to account for the Waverley Novels? Hardly. We need some impulse, some crystallizing touch, and we know whose finger gave it. Scott—we have his own avowal—set out to do for Scotland what Maria Edgeworth had done for Ireland. And what had she done? She had painted a picture, not of contemporary Ireland, but of an Ireland just fading on the view, about as far from her eye as the '45 was from Scott, not quite so far as Trollope is from us. Of course, it was impossible to confine an epic genius like Scott's within the elegant frame which Maria Edgeworth just filled. None the less, it is worth while reading one of the early Waverley Novels, *Rob Roy* or *The Antiquary*, with an eye for the Edgeworth strand in the fabric. You catch it in the garden at Osbaldistone Hall. You hear a very familiar strain in the protestations of Mrs. Mac-

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leuchar, who kept the 'laigh shop', *anglice*, a cellar, opening on to the High Street. And in passages like those you realize that Miss Edgeworth had shown him the one thing which was really indispensable for the development of his powers, and that was the example of an idiom. It is, as I think Saintsbury once said, the idiom that gives her stories their amazing verisimilitude. Sir Patrick's funeral is enough. 'All the gentlemen of the three counties were at it—far and near, how they flocked—my great grandfather said, that to see all the women in their red cloaks even, you would have taken them for the army drawn out.—Then such a fine whillaluh! you might have heard it to the farthest end of the county, and happy the man who could get but a sight of the hearse!'

She has, you see, faced and overcome what is one of the greatest difficulties of fiction, I mean the difficulty of making the characters really talk. And her example released, one might say, Scott's gift for language. He had already at his command a full keyboard of dialect, from the illustrious and courtly vernacular, such as old ladies who had danced at Holyrood with the Chevalier still spoke, to the hardly human lingo of the Dougal creature in the Tolbooth at Glasgow; and under Scott's touch every one of them rings true. He had thought a great deal about this question of language. He knew his Defoe, he confesses that the incomparable conversation between Bothwell and Milnwood in *Old Mortality* was lifted straight from Defoe's *History of the Union*. And for his own purposes Defoe's dialect is perfect. In what other language could he have written the *Journal of the Plague Year*? But then, Defoe makes Gustavus Adolphus talk exactly like a stevedore by London Bridge. Scott wanted something better, and left to

himself he could not find it. In his essay on Clara Reeve he sets out his difficulties and his solution.

(To interest a modern reader, he says, the writer must invest his characters with a language unknown to their time.) a compromise like the apparel of King Lear, who wears neither the robes of King George nor the blue paint of an ancient Briton. And Scott, in effect, recommends a factitious antique, the style of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, sufficiently out of date to correspond with the date of the story, and sufficiently copious for the characters to express sentiments which they never felt. That is really not very promising, and the result, as we all know, is that if Richard and Wilfred talk like our great-grandfathers, Gurth and Wamba talk like nothing on earth. It is unsafe to trust one's memory for the contents of forty-eight volumes, but I cannot recall one passage where Scott is genuinely humorous in English, and only one where he is truly eloquent—the judgment given in the case of *The Two Drovers*, which is indeed one of the noblest passages in English fiction. But the clumsy Late-Augustan which furnishes the staple of his dialogue is a language only fit for Scott's heroes to make love in to Scott's heroines. Sometimes it seems designed for even lowlier purposes. 'Circumstances have been communicated to us of a nature so extraordinary that, reluctant as we are to exercise such authority, we are constrained to request from you an explanation of them.' To my ear, that sentence from *The Monastery* suggests that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is getting really cross with the Ministry of Fuel and Power.

(But whenever Scott is speaking in dialect, a magical reality comes over the scene.) Suppose, I have some-

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times thought, that I had only *Ivanhoe* and *Kenilworth* and *Woodstock* to go on, and an anonymous manuscript was brought to me. Should I have guessed that the author of the printed books had it in him to conceive the outpourings of David Deans, to tell the tale of Wandering Willie's grandsire, or to write that magnificent descant in *Guy Mannering*: 'Ride your ways, Ellangowan, ride your ways, Godfrey Bertram'? I doubt it. They belong to a different kind of mind!

(I have dwelt on that because of its bearing on what I hope you will not think me too bold in calling the revolution effected by Scott in the writing of history, and particularly of mediaeval history. The secret is to treat every document as the record of a conversation, and go on reading till you hear the people speaking. And that is, or will be, the keyword of the new school. 'What happened here?' the older generation might ask. 'No battle was fought, no treaty was signed, no council assembled—pass on.' Their successors will answer, 'People were talking. Let us stop and listen.' 'It was never right nor justice, double doom to take for one trespass.' That is the case of Becket against the Crown. But where was that judgment given? In King's Bench? It sounds much more like the King's Arms! But that, I repeat, is the Middle Ages. ✓ That is how the history of institutions must be written, being the record at once of what happened, and what people said about it when it was happening.)

Scott himself never knew what treasures of record were lying just below the surface. But he did show those who came after him how to handle the lore which the great scholars of the mediaeval revival disclosed: how to search for historic truth

impartially and unconstrainedly on the battle-field and in the sheepfold, in court and cottage and counting-house, (knowing that the object of history is nothing less than the setting forth of an entire culture.) You can see this new idea pushing to the front in Voltaire, in Robertson, even in Johnson's *Western Islands*, but it was Scott who put the conception into currency; not by any express doctrine, but by the enchantment of his practice; not of set purpose, but by the instinctive movement of a mind equipped and constituted as we have seen, the mind of a Borderer who was also a lawyer. I need not remind you how large a place—some readers find it too large—the law and its humours occupy in Scott's pages, but I should like to point out how the discipline, the legal discipline, operates in shaping that masterpiece of character and contrast, *The Two Drovers*: the wonderful economy with which the narrative is managed, how we are told all we need to know and no more, and how we are compelled to hold our judgment until the tale is completed. Only a lawyer could have written that, and among lawyers, I think, only one who, like his own Counsellor Pleydell, had listened to the tale of the hill folk in their own speech and had himself perambulated the marches of Lewins-hope and Broadmeadow, below Penmenscaur.

Let us take another example of Scott's craftsmanship in the field he opened to the historians of the next age—the twelfth chapter of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and the breakdown of feudal economy at Wolf's-hope. Observe the elements as Scott puts them in their place. Hereditary respect for the lord—that still survives. But the tenants have prudently contrived to get parchments, title-deeds to their little holdings, and so broken the chain of feudal depen-

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dence, without as yet acquiring any sense, or habit, of freedom. That came later: first they grumbled, then they resisted, finally they refused to comply. In vain did Caleb point out that, as a matter of understanding, Ravenswood was entitled to his Monday egg. They scratched their heads and answered 'they could not say'. At length the cooper rose and said the hens had cackled many a day for Ravenswood, and it was time they cackled for those that gave them roost and barley. He proposes to call in the law in the person of Davie Dingwall, and Davie arrives, his portmantau stuffed with feu-charters, and behind Davie all the powers of the Crown embodied in a corporal and four redcoats. Which word in passing starts another hare. A redcoat is an English soldier, more especially a soldier of the Parliamentary army. Has Scott made a slip, or did the statesmen of the Revolution time find it convenient to employ English soldiers on these necessary but disagreeable duties? However that may be, Scott has, so to speak, taken one drop out of the stream of history, and shown us as in a microscope what the transformation, the passage from status to contract, really meant to those who lived through it, and by their words and doings brought it about. 'Here indeed we have men's common thought of common things.'

A little while back I used the word 'contrast'. May I remind you that among educated speakers in Scott's time it had not altogether shed its technical and pictorial meaning—the balancing of figures in opposition, the assembly of carefully graduated distances. Well on in the nineteenth century we find Emerson writing, 'The steep contrasts of condition make the picturesque in society.' Now, if you take

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three great masters of observation, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Scott, you will notice how much more naturally and easily Chaucer and Scott take these contrasts than Shakespeare does. Think of the Pilgrims—'What a crowd,' you may say; 'how uncomfortable they must have been in each other's company.' They are not a crowd, they are a fellowship, and, knowing their places, know exactly how to behave.

'Wel seyde, by corpus dominus,' quod our hoste,
'Now longe moot thou sayle by the coste,
Sir gentil maister, gentil marineer!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad yeer!
But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,
Who shal now telle first, of al this route,
Another tale'; and with that word he sayde,
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,
'My lady Prioress, by your leve,
So that I wiste, I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?'
'Gladly,' quod she, and seyde as ye shal here.

Now, I have an unhappy suspicion that if Shakespeare had handled that little dialogue, he would have spoiled it. He would not have understood a world where you pass quite naturally from Limehouse slang to the courtesies of the parlour. Walter Raleigh, I remember, somewhere says that Shakespeare never quite knew what to do with his working-classes. He can make them gloriously funny and at times extremely tiresome, so that when they are not losing themselves in the thickets of learned speech they are spouting morality, like the oldest inhabitant accounting for his longevity to our special correspondent.

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Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood.

But, for the most part, the world would get on just as well if no such people existed. Until we come to *The Winter's Tale*. And in the sheep-shearing which is the nodus of the plot, you remember how evenly the comedy and poetry are distributed, how necessary the shepherd and clown, even Autolycus, are to the conduct of the fable; how easily they all sustain their parts, with what aptness they all speak. They are comic, broadly comic—but they are not comic relief. The play could not get on without them, nor could the world. Shakespeare has discovered that. Chaucer and Scott always knew it. The fate of the Empire turns on the bonds which Mr. Owen travelled to Glasgow to recover, and Poor Peter Peebles has his part to play in the last sad hour of the House of Stuart. A convention has been swept away, the canvas of historic fiction has been enlarged. We may forget that what, as much as anything else, took Europe by storm was the abundance and variety and reality of Scott's characters: *peintre immortel de l'homme!* And when once the canvas of fiction had been enlarged the canvas of history could be enlarged too.

Antiquary, poet, and novelist as he was, Scott, we are never likely to forget, was a man immersed in the daily business of his own time, the time of the Revolution and the Revolutionary Wars. How did he feel about it all? The *Life of Napoleon* happens to be a favourite bedside book of mine, and as I only read it as a prelude to sleep I am hardly qualified to appreciate it critically. Goethe, if I remember

right, took the precaution, not unknown to less eminent practitioners, of reviewing it before he read it, and he assured a French visitor that it was inaccurate and partial. But he laid his finger on the essential truth when he said that it is a document for the history of England. Often, as I read it drowsily, the fancy comes over me that I am not reading but listening—that supper is over, the cups are filled, and the minstrel has been sent for to tell once more how the false Frenchman forsook his faith, and, giving himself over to the powers of evil, was smitten again and again by sea and land until the world had peace. I do not wonder it made Sainte-Beuve or any other Frenchman dance with rage. And Sainte-Beuve selects for special censure the abundance of metaphor and simile which, if you come to think of it, are essential to the fullness of the epic style. In fact, I have sometimes found myself dreamily turning these flowers of narrative into similes after the Homeric manner. ‘As when children playing together make a little hut of boughs and branches, hoping that their elder kinsfolk will take refuge in it, but they pass by unnoticing, or even tread it underfoot, even so did the Girondins think that they had made a constitution.’ The parallel seems to me to be brilliantly illuminating, and almost disquietingly applicable to others besides the Girondins!

But to our question—How did Scott feel?—How did he conceive the transition of which he was the witness? It is a question always worth asking about a historian, because the historian is one to whom the past has something of the homely triviality of the present, and the present already has something of the shadowy magnificence of the past. I think the answer is given in his letter to Joanna Baillie about

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the new rail-roads. 'Half proud, half sad, half angry and half pleased.' It is typical of Scott, with his intensely practical mind, that he should have foreseen the changes the railway would effect years before they elicited from the Duke of Wellington his magisterial pronouncement, 'I see no reason to suppose that these machines will ever force themselves into general use', and Doctor Arnold's later judgment, 'Railways have given the death blow to feudalism.' It was impossible not to be pleased, impossible not to be proud of the great industrial achievement of the age. And yet what was the price to be paid? To Wordsworth, in the last Books of *The Excursion*, the loss of individual human dignity. To Scott, the break-up of a social order which, one might say, he had kept alive by main force of his imagination. The new industrialism, blending with old revolutionary discontent, was creating that radicalism which overshadowed Scott's later years and found voice in the cry 'Burke Sir Walter!' from his own Border people. It is Wolf's-hope once more. It is the severing of those stable and friendly relations which to Scott were the living tissue of a healthy stock.

It was, I think, his deep and simple conviction that if the relations between the Duke of Buccleuch and Walter Scott, and between Walter Scott and Tom Purdie, had existed in France, there would have been no French Revolution because there would have been no need for one. Now, they were snapping everywhere. And in one part of the kingdom, in his own country, in those Highlands which he had made as famous and as familiar to the world as Homer's Ithaca and Homer's Troy, that future was not only dark but desolate. Clanship was no more; and the passage in which Scott recounts its end is one of the

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most moving and, in its eloquence, one of the truest things ever written in history, the kind of history which Scott taught the next generation to read, to write, and to understand.

A milder race arose;—the Highlanders with whom our youth was conversant, cultivating sedulously the means of subsistence which their country afforded, and converting the broadsword into the ploughshare, and the spear into the herdsman's crook, yet preserving an aptitude to military habits, and an enthusiastic energy of character derived from the recollections of former days, and fostered by the tales of the grey-headed veterans, who looked back with regret to the days when each man's arms clattered round him when he walked the hills. Among these men, the spirit of clanship subsisted no longer indeed as a law of violence, but still as a law of love. They maintained, in many instances, their chiefs at their own expense; and they embodied themselves in regiments, that the head of the family might obtain military preferment. Some such distinction between Highlanders and Lowlanders would long have subsisted, had it been fostered by those who, we think, were most interested in maintaining it. The dawn of civilization would have risen slowly on the system of Highland Society; and as the darker and harsher shades were already dispelled, the romantic contrast and variety reflected upon ancient and patriarchal usages, by the general diffusion of knowledge, would, like the brilliant colours of the morning clouds, have survived for some time, ere blended with the general mass of ordinary manners. In many instances, Highland proprietors have laboured with laudable and humane precaution to render the change introduced by a new mode of cultivation gentle and gradual, and to provide, as far as possible, employment and protection for those families who were thereby dispossessed of their ancient habitations. But in other, and in but too many instances, the glens of the Highlands have been drained, not of their superfluity of population, but of the whole mass of the inhabitants, dispossessed by an unrelenting avarice, which will be one day found to have been as shortsighted as it is unjust and selfish. Meanwhile the Highlands may become the fairy ground for

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romance and poetry, or subject of experiment for the professors of speculation, political and economical.—But if the hour of need should come—and it may not, perhaps, be far distant—the pibroch may sound through the deserted region, but the summons will remain unanswered. The children who have left her will re-echo from a distant shore the sounds with which they took leave of their own—*Ha til, ha til, ha til, mi tulidh!*—‘We return—we return—we return—no more!’

BENEDETTO CROCE

I SHOULD find it easier to write of Croce's book ¹ if I had the least idea what it was all about. Paragraph after paragraph, firmly gripped, shrinks to a platitude, and in the sequence of platitudes I can discern no nexus and no relevance to the title of the book. I can indeed see that much is to be taken as a *critique* of bad Italian writers, whom I have not read, but whose demerits I can divine more clearly from my own experience of their class than from Croce's exposition of their fallacies—the authors, for example, of nationalist or racial histories, or of romanticized biographies. But whenever Croce lifts himself to what—chiefly from the terminology—I guess to be his philosophy, I am reminded of the cowman in *Cold Comfort Farm*, whose idealism seems to be of exactly the same type. There were, it will be remembered, four cows: Feckless, Pointless, Graceless and Aimless. One of Feckless's legs fell off, and she had to walk on three. The cowman's attention being directed to this *contretemps*, he replied: 'And how can I, who do understand the deep heart of the dumb creatures, be minding about their legs?' How, with all these abstract nouns to roll around, can Croce be minding about their sense?

The following simple and fundamental truth can never be sufficiently insisted on; many minds lost in the shadows of naturalism and positivism find it hard to grasp: that 'cause'

¹ *History As the Story of Liberty* (Allen and Unwin)

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(though it may seem superfluous we must here too insist that we mean the concept and not the word 'cause' which belongs to ordinary conversation) the concept of cause must and should remain outside history because it was born in the realm of natural science and its place is there. No one has yet succeeded in practice in relating a fragment of history by matching certain causes with their effects.

If this means that a purely deterministic attitude to history, making no allowance for individual impulses, breaks down, it is a platitude. If it means anything else, it is nonsense.

Men with a gift for history . . . have always been labourers in various fields, inclined to meditate upon situations which have arisen in order to overcome them and to assist others to overcome them by means of new activity: politicians who have written political history, philosophers who have written histories of philosophy, *artistic spirits who have tried by means of their intelligence to distil from the history of art an enjoyment of works of art*, men of great civil and moral fervour who have severely scrutinized the history of human civilizations.'

Always, it will be observed. Then am I to conclude that Gibbon had no 'gift for history' or that he was a man 'of great civil and moral fervour'? I could sustain this latter judgment, in the sense that Gibbon had a most exalted sense of the virtues and privileges of civilization. But that, I am sure, is not what Croce means. And the sentence I have italicized is as good an example as I have lately encountered of pseudo-philosophic phrase-making. It is the sort of thing we used to write in an essay timed to last ten minutes, when we only had ideas for five.

Historical culture has for its object the keeping alive of the consciousness which human society has of its own past, that is, of its present, that is, of itself; and to furnish it with what is always required in the choice of the paths it has to follow, and to keep in readiness for it whatever may be useful in this way, in the future.

No one rates historical culture more highly than I do, but these declamatory pretensions will do nothing to recommend it, because they are obviously grounded on an error too gross to be called a misconception. Conceivably, if we knew all that had ever happened, we might understand all that is happening, and, for aught I know, all that ever will. But the patch called history is so tiny in relation to the unrecorded stretch, and the illumination of that patch so imperfect, that it is idle to speak of the 'consciousness which human society has of its own past'—even if we assume that human society can in any real sense be said to have a consciousness. And how, that being so, can these fragments of knowledge, so many of them capriciously recorded and accidentally preserved, furnish guidance in the choice of a future path? I should base my defence on the much plainer ground that some people are interested in the past, and that in this, as in every other sphere of knowledge, a right and well-informed way of thinking is salutary, a wrong may be poisonous to the whole intellectual constitution, of a man or a country. There, at any rate, is something on which we can all agree.

Then suppose we apply it to a topic which, as again we shall all agree, it really is of consequence to be clear about—the conception of economic liberty. It gives Croce no difficulty.

Liberty, however, will always be formal and legal, and therefore with spiritual and moral: material or economic liberty is a meaningless phrase. Whatever could it mean? Freedom from material things? Certainly not.

Nothing, of course, is easier—or more common among those whom Croce calls the Eternal Vulgar—than to score a point by attributing a ridiculous sense

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to the other man's words and then demonstrating their absurdity. And if material liberty can be taken to mean freedom from material things, I see no reason why spiritual liberty should not be defined as freedom from spiritual things. But in all these matters, with some definition we must begin, and, because liberty is a more general term than economic, logic requires that it should be first defined. And liberty being also, as a matter of historic fact, very largely an aristocratic conception, it is to the earliest formularies of aristocracy that we must first turn.

The real and tonic virtue of Aristotle is that, to whatever height of abstraction he may rise, we know that his feet are always on the ground, and that in his political speculations he is thinking all the time of what people really do, and what they really think and feel about it. Now in his doctrine the most completely free man is the aristocrat living in an aristocracy, ruling and ruled by turns: and the fundamental liberty which he posits, and which alone makes such a government possible, is σχολάζειν καὶ μηδὲν ἀσχημονεῖν, to have leisure and never to do anything which is felt to be degrading.

We may define liberty, then, as the condition of those who live like that, who enjoy living like that, and are under no apprehension of ever being forced to live otherwise. What they do with their leisure, whether their notions of the degrading are sound or perverted, and how they protect their way of life against disturbance or dissolution, are, of course, very important considerations, but they do not enter into the definition. Apply this conception to the world of economic ordinances. Is there any necessary, any logical, incompatibility? I confess I see none. And if there is none, then economic

liberty, so far from being a meaningless phrase, becomes a directive idea of the greatest value, seeing that it points to the creation of such an economic order as involves in itself the progressive elevation of the individual regarded as an intelligence; a progressive improvement—which obviously only the community can effect—in the conditions under which he works and lives; and whatever measures are necessary for protecting these advances as they are made. That may seem a great deal to get out of four words of Aristotle. But you can get it. What is more, you can verify your deduction by observation: you can employ it as a guide to action. Whereas, the kind of idealism which Croce—and not Croce alone—professes, is so inflated with verbal alembications of the primitive theme, the mooring-lines which ought to hold all philosophy to the ground are so thin, that the balloon takes charge of itself, and goes soaring away in its aimless and mischievous career, until it becomes a public duty for someone to put a bullet through it. I suppose, for example, that Professor Tawney is one of those who have ‘defiled historic truth with casualism, determinism and psychology’, and defaced their study of the relation between Calvinism and Capitalism ‘by lapses into psychological occasionalism and contingentism’. Professor Tawney, I have no doubt, will ask for a translation of the indictment before he pleads to it. And the translation will show that it means nothing at all. It is only the wallowing of the balloon among the clouds.

I remember once reading the Syllabus of Pio Nono, with much admiration for its sound sense, and only discovering at the end that the propositions which had impressed me so favourably were all under anathema. I have had the same experience again.

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An integral and complete vision, unbiassed, without favouritism for any aspect at the expense of others—that (it may be urged) is what is wanted to raise the historian to the level of the scientist who studies all the works of nature in their entire conjointness and common manifestation.

Really, I said, there are some grains of corn at the bottom of this windbag: and my mind launched out on its favourite run—how the grand Ionian conception of *ιστορίη*, as the record of an entire culture, its growth, its characterizing particulars, its contacts and intersections, was constricted by Thucydides to politics and war: how Voltaire and Robertson, one in a brilliant foray, the other in majestic deployment, broke through the enclosing circle: how Ranke devised new weapons and new tactics for the advance (it is a bad sign when a man, professing to write on history, speaks contemptuously of Ranke: he is, and always must be, the Head of the Profession), and how, and by whom, it was revealed to me that the subject of history is not events or forces or causes or people, but 'their common thought of common things'. But, not a bit of it.

Such an ideal drawn from the natural sciences and imposed upon historiography could never bear any fruit except the repertory or manual.

Enough? I think so. But what is it, I wondered; what is it that makes the simple English soul, with its prodigious wealth of native philosophy and experience on which to draw, the inevitable victim of every foreign declaimer, with an advertised name, who can hire a lecture-room or find a translator?

CONTINUITY¹

Not long ago I was reading a social survey, as it might now be called, of a Wiltshire village, made at a time, about a hundred years ago, when the shadow of the West Riding was sweeping over the old woollen trade, and one by one the looms were ceasing to ply. I was struck by the tragic implication of one sentence: 'The parents never go to the weddings of their children.' There you have a community which has lost all interest in its own future: and it seemed to me for a moment that in this minute drop, accidentally drawn from the great stream of history and put under the microscope, I was looking at the fate of whole civilizations. They perished because they lost interest in themselves.

From time to time I have asked psychologists and their kindred educationists to tell me if they can what 'interest' means. When we say that a man is interested in this or that, what state of mind have we in view? And the definition which on the whole seemed to me most satisfying, was also the simplest. 'I say that I am interested in a thing when I want to do something about it.' Interest is that sunny corner of the mind where ideas ripen towards action. From what point and at what angle the rays will fall seems to be settled by some power, heredity or what not, over which we have no control. Wise teaching may awaken a latent interest: self-discipline may streng-

¹ The Leslie Stephen Lecture, delivered in Cambridge in May 1949

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then a growing interest. The one thing they cannot do is to make a man interested in what he is not interested in. Either he wants to do something about it, or he does not: and that is that. If I had sailed with Ulysses, not all the sirens of the sea would have made me take my eyes off the map. I am interested in maps.

But how, if our definition is to stand, how is it possible to be interested in the past, because manifestly it is impossible to do anything about that? One answer, I suppose, might be that we cannot escape from it: the past does live on in its records and memorials, and to reduce them to pattern, perspective, and coherence, is to some minds a compelling need, a determination, almost a craving. But these are the historians, the high priests of continuity. What is it that holds a group of simple folk together while an archaeologist expounds the lay-out of a Roman camp, or the circles of Stonehenge or Avebury; or the parson explains the successive reconstructions of the parish church? To that question I think the answer is: 'All that happened here. It might have happened to us.' It is history, but history which has acquired in the telling something of the intimacy of a family tradition. It might have happened to us. It is ours. And that, we may say, gives the emotional overtone to the idea of continuity. Like the children in Béranger's song, to whom Napoleon is not a figure out of the history books, but someone whom their grandmother had seen. *Tu l'as vu, grand'mère: tu l'as vu?*

Now, those of us whose chief concern is the history of ideas and their embodiment in creeds, and formulas, and institutions, find that we need co-ordinates by which to plot the process of change. Measurement by centuries and decades is obviously

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mechanical and crude, and so we fall back on the generation. We say that the generation of Wordsworth felt this, and the generation of Gladstone thought that. In a sense it is true enough, but it is a truth not easy to reconcile with the fact that the sequence of the generations is a continuous stream, so that everybody is a little older or younger than somebody else. Rather more than a hundred years ago, one of our statisticians, taking for his field of observation the English peerage over three centuries, and allowing for untoward incidents on the battlefield or Tower Hill, determined the flow mathematically to be on this wise: the grandfather dies at fifty-two, leaving a son of twenty-eight and a grandson of four. The actual figures are of no special account, and would no doubt need to be recalculated to satisfy the improved conditions of our time. But I have always found this theorem, even if it is no more than a scientific toy, a useful instrument to have at hand when exploring those changes, so elusive and yet so palpable, which create what Shelley called the endowment of an age, and we might call its mental climate. I mean, I add sixteen to give the grandfather a reasonable span of life, and the grandson a chance to grow up, and then, whenever I am thinking of a character, in public life it may be, or in literature, I always ask 'What was happening in the world when he was twenty?' If I am thinking of a year, the question is 'Who were in their forties then?' To the twenties I go for the shaping of ideas not fully disclosed: to the forties for the handling of things already established. And the same analysis serves to keep before our minds the further truth that, in the nature of things, mankind is divided into transmitters and receivers and a middle group facing both

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ways at once: and, very often, trying to shake off the domination of the immediate past, and to impose itself on the immediate future. From which it might seem to follow that the continuity of a culture depends on the interest which this group takes in what has gone before and what is still to come.

Things are not quite so simple as that. Return to our village, its life gradually ebbing under the pressure of an alien civilization, and imagine a young man of the pioneering type, with energy to resist the pressure and courage to face the shadow. He may seek a new life, perhaps in a town, perhaps beyond the seas. He will attach himself to a different culture, often with the fervour of a convert looking back on the past with resentment and contempt. Adam Smith observed that, in the early days of industrialism; and you remember the cry from the heart of Cobbett's village girl who had emigrated to America—'O what a blessed thing it is to live within sound of the Gospel and to go to meeting in real leather shoes.' But then, mellowing with the years, memory softens the picture. His reminiscences of the old life, too far away now to be dangerous, begin to charm first himself and then his hearers: and the grandchildren, anyhow the great-grandchildren, will be writing to the parson of the parish for permission to make photostats of the register where their ancestry is inscribed. This is not wholly an allegory: I actually know parishes which earn a modest but welcome subvention by rendering that service to the church which is in Salt Lake City. In the history of culture there seems to be something at work like the diplomatic law of the next-but-one allied against the one-in-between: Scotland and France against England, England and Austria against France: the Re-

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naissance evoking Antiquity: the Nineteenth Century calling to the Middle Ages: Maynard Keynes appealing to Malthus for help in the economic troubles of our own time: and Wells casting back to the Encyclopaedists of eighteenth-century France.

In other words, this continuity can be pictured as a twofold process, like that which Sir Thomas Browne ascribes to the 'great and exemplary wheels of heaven' and their two circles: 'so that while we are carried about by the swinge and rapt of the one, we may maintain a natural and proper course in the slow and sober wheel of the other.' In these last years the motion of that wheel, which our fathers call progress, as contrasted with the advance and recoil of fashion, has been anything but sober and slow. The endowment of the age, and not its material endowment only, has been transformed, in a way and to a degree for which I suppose no parallel can be found in history. Take one instance only and follow its implications. The age of exploration is closed. The earth has no more secrets. And then think how powerfully, from Homer down to times within our own memory, those secrets and their unveiling have worked on the imagination of the world. What has become, what is becoming, what will become of all that? Is it possible for impulses and interests so deeply established, so magnificently recorded, simply to cease? Suppose they do? Then what becomes of *The Ancient Mariner*? How will it read in an age which has never seen a ship under sail, an age to which the Great South Sea is only a stretch—rather a tiresome stretch perhaps—in a swift flight always growing swifter?

Or, and I have sometimes put this question to English teachers—how does *Paradise Lost* read to a generation which regards the Old Testament as of no

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greater concern than so many Red Indian legends, and could not repeat, accurately, three texts from the Gospels? Such things, I am told, are quite possible to-day. Not long ago my eye caught a letter in one of our popular papers. It ran thus:

I grew up without ever seeing a Bible. None of us children knew anything about it. Out of curiosity I have bought myself a copy. I want to read it as literature, but its length makes it a forbidding-looking task. Can you suggest a method?

To that reader much of English literature must be pure mystification, and much of European art a blank canvas. But instances crowd upon one's notice: no question about it, the strands which linked us to the past—our common island past—are parting one by one: and we aged men at times feel rather like the Captains of the Wall in Kipling's story, striking off the towers as they fell to the barbarians day by day. Is it not possible, we ask ourselves, that the wheel, which has carried us so far away already, may take us out of reach of the past altogether?

That contraction of our globe, which, with its consequences, latent or revealed, is the most significant outcome of physical science, is beginning to force itself on the common imagination, and to affect us with anticipations, and perhaps alarms, hardly conceivable to earlier ages. It was not, I suppose, an altogether unreasonable fancy of Alexander's that, having reached the Eastern Sea, he might return by Scythia and the Celtic lands, taking Italy in his stride, and Africa at his leisure. It is certainly not an unreasonable speculation to-day that a new Macedon, newly armed, might shatter all existing states and orders, and remodel them in a world-wide

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Empire, acknowledging one Sovereign and one Sacred Book, and following one way of life. And, viewed in that perspective, do the Tales of a Grandfather greatly matter? Should the children be encouraged to listen to them, or forbidden? *Quid Athenis et Hierosolymis?* What has Jerusalem to do with Athens? The victorious Church did not find that an easy question to answer. And if the reply had been, 'Let the dead bury their dead, and the writings of the heathen perish', the world to-day would be a vastly different thing from the world we know: but in what way different who can even guess? It might be worse; it might be much better.

Culture, let us always remember, is not a state but a process; a body of assumptions, judgments, tastes, and habits, constantly changing, constantly re-formulating themselves, but also constantly swerving back to gather up something which the grandfathers had dropped and the sons left lying beside the course. Indeed, it is by these movements, these epicycles of swerve and recovery, that the tradition is not only preserved but enriched.

This is a theme so abundant, and to me at least so alluring, that I must firmly resist the temptation to expatiate. But part of the secret, and the main part I suspect, lies in those words I let fall just now: the last-but-one is too far off to be dangerous. We can contemplate it without concern or alarm. No one has told us to like it, so no one can scold us if we don't: it is not on the recommended list, and it does not cramp the stirrings of our own minds. It is like being let out of the garden, and allowed to go exploring for ourselves on the heath. And we see footsteps not altogether unlike our own: we find things which the

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in-betweens had not thought worth the bringing home. We have glimpses of that timeless quality in art, in literature, even in history: 'It happened to them, it might have happened to us.' The same purposes, otherwise conceived: the same problems, otherwise approached. So we bring our gatherings back to the garden, announcing our little adventures and improving our little estate. And the critics, always elbowing to be in the front of fashion, will inform a submissive world that Meredith is coming back, that Browning is coming back, and the world makes haste to be in time to greet them. A few days ago I read that Tocqueville is coming back (I wish he was); and, mark my words, before long the Philosophic Radicals will be lifting their forgotten heads. And, to speak more gravely, at the Basle Centenary in 1923, that great Dutch scholar Huizinga said: 'We thought we had got to the end of Erasmus. We know now that we have not got to the beginning.' May his day come soon!

I am, as some among you know, one of those who hold for truth the doctrine first revealed by Maitland, that the essential matter of history is not what happened, but what people thought, and said, about it. And for any community at a certain time we must posit a certain norm of behaviour, an endowment which governs, very largely, all it says and all it thinks. I say very largely, because we are not to exclude those flashes of 'uncommunicated lightning' of which Shelley also speaks and which make the interpretation of history such an awkward business for the interpreters. But we all know, for example, how the poets of a period seem at times to be writing each other's verses: and musicians, I am told, can at hearing place a tune in its right decade simply by the idiom. And

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next we must allow for that singularly clear-cut difference of mind between the cautious, the conservative, tending towards the servile: and the venturesome, the impetuous, tending towards the rebellious. Indeed, I once read an essay in which an economist sought to explain the trade cycle in those terms alone. Things are pursuing an even course, till one prudent capitalist says: 'This is too good to last.' He reduces his outlay: the chill shoots along the fibres of world commerce, and contraction sets in everywhere, till one of the more venturesome thinks: 'This cannot last for ever'; the decline stops, and the spiral begins to turn upwards. Economically, this may be no more than a myth, as all the other economists would no doubt maintain. But I have always found it a most suggestive myth, with an underlying idea applicable in many other fields. All mutations of culture start with a critical deviation from some acknowledged norm.

But what starts the deviation? Or perhaps that question comes later, and we ought to begin by asking how the norm is established. It is created by the pressure of society bent, unconsciously and instinctively, on maintaining or asserting the way of life which it feels to be satisfactory. By society I mean nothing abstract or remote, but simply those conversational judgments, for approval or disapproval, to which the individual is subjected. The judgments of parents, nurses, governesses, pastors and masters of all degrees, are, on the whole, the voice of society in equilibrium and bent on maintaining its equilibrium. The judgments of the younger generation are, on the whole, the voice of society dissident and exploratory. Such is the provision that Nature has made for the stability and progress of her human

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tribes. All of which no doubt would need much qualification and many reservations before it could be offered as an exact analysis. But for our purpose it may serve.

I forget how many philosophies of history I have lived through and survived. I hope I have learned something from them all. But the one to which I find myself most often returning—largely because I have so often seen it proved in matters within my own experience—is Carlyle's. And that in its turn might be called an expansion, in Heaven knows how many volumes, of one great, indeed prophetic, saying of Francis Bacon: 'A froward retention of Custom is as turbulent a thing as an Innovation' (which if the Stuarts had taken to heart, there need have been no Civil War). A froward retention—not necessarily oppressive, but stupid, unreasonable, out of date and out of harmony with the changing sentiment of the times. How often in history has the mishandling of a tradition by feeble successors given the signal for revolt; and revolt, or revolution, is only an instance on the grand scale of what is going on always and everywhere on a lesser scale until we reach the minimum in the changes of fashion, in clothes it may be or in speech. The deviation may carry us into 'the tumult of public revolution', through the storm-zone of civic strife and catastrophe, or it may do no more than substitute a soft hat for a hard one, or Christian names for surnames; just as one earthquake may do no more than rattle the teacups and another lay a city in ruins. But the process is identical.

So, let us return to the question we are holding in suspense: What starts the deviation? I think it is possible to detect two initiatory causes. The first is simple weariness, with something perhaps of the

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exasperation that monotony induces. We grow tired of hearing Aristides called 'the Just'. We wonder whether some livelier exponent of the virtue might not be found: whether, perhaps, the virtue itself might not be restated in terms more topical, and therefore more interesting, because they suggest something new for us to *do*. In that light you can, for instance, see how inevitably the notion of political justice in our own nineteenth century evolved into the notion of social justice, and that notion in turn created a whole system of new institutions, some of which are already beginning to show the cracks of time. Aristides was no doubt a very good man, as Pope and Tennyson were very good poets. But to go through life behaving like Aristides might be as cheerless as it would be to confine our reading to *The Triumphs of Temper* by Mr. Hayley, or *The Epic of Hades* by Sir Lewis Morris: or conform our behaviour in the twentieth century to the prescriptions of some old trade union of the nineteenth. What was the Romantic Revolution but an unofficial strike?

Close on fatigue comes resentment, if we feel that the norm is being imposed on us by authority: for our good, authority may say: for its own upholding, we may suspect. A vested interest has been defined as an economic position which can no longer be morally justified. Are there not also vested notions, intellectual positions which can no longer be logically justified, and are maintained because to abandon them would be certainly uncomfortable, and perhaps dangerous? I think I have quoted elsewhere, but it will always stand re-quoting, one of the most illuminating sentences on the Victorian record. When Charles Lyell, the greatest geologist of his time, after some hesitation, came out on the side of Darwin and

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The Origin of Species, Darwin with his gentle modesty wrote: 'Considering his age, his former views and his position in society, I think his conduct has been heroic.' Society bent on maintaining its equilibrium—in that instance its religious equilibrium—is wonderfully sensitive to the first movement of disturbance, wonderfully keen of hearing, wonderfully prompt in awarding its censures. It may be only the rattling of the teacups. But we are taking no risks. And the outcome will be, or will appear to the coming generation to be, just such a frowardness as that of which Bacon speaks: inciting to little rebellions, local risings, and in nine cases out of ten to nothing more.

But suppose this process, these continual collisions of froward orthodoxy and impatient novelty, to coincide with some sudden, or rapid, extension of experience: or with the discovery of some new instrument of inquiry. I was speaking a few minutes ago of that great achievement of physical science, the contraction of the globe. But I have sometimes thought that in the long run the new psychology will be found to have had a greater influence on the ordering of human destiny than the new physics. Consider the logical endowment of the great Victorian rationalists, Huxley and John Morley and the man whose memory we honour to-day, Leslie Stephen. It was their fundamental faith that henceforth all propositions must be in the form: 'The evidence being what it is, I am bound to hold that this is that. To-day: but, with the progress of knowledge, to-morrow this will be found to be something else.' They questioned everything, except the validity of their own logic, and that is what is questioned now.

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To their conception of mind, as a more and more perfectly adjusted mechanism, there has succeeded the conception, or the picture, of mind as an iceberg, the greater part out of sight, and carried by deep currents only to be tracked and calculated by wholly new instruments. Or, in Wells's happy image, a palimpsest, the real significance of which is only to be elicited by some novel and subtle reagent. Looking back I feel that the arrival of the New Psychology had much of the excitement that attended the arrival of the New Learning at the Renaissance, and well do I remember the frowardness with which 'the childish impertinences of psychology' were banned by the old philosophic guard. And not by metaphysicians only. Between the wars I was once taken to see the last of the old agnostic stalwarts, Edward Clodd. His first book had appeared in 1875. He was in bed, but dressed for visitors rather like the Aged Parent in *Great Expectations*: and his conversation, still most vigorous, turned chiefly on—the moral obliquity of psycho-analysis. But—the work was done; and its consequence may be judged by this comparison. To reduce a voyage from six months to six weeks was a notable achievement. To reduce it from six weeks to six days was a revolution. But at that point the return to the imagination diminishes. We are not likely to come to six minutes, and the difference between four days and three is no great matter. But to those other explorations, explorations of the mind, individual or social, and of things even deeper than the mind, we can set no limit whatsoever: or to their application either. But we know enough already to see that they might be turned to purposes more dreadful than any form of bodily torment or bodily death.

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Let us go back to that village of mine. Why had it lost all interest in its future? Because it could do nothing about it. It was succumbing to a power, remote, impersonal, invisible; uncontrolled and indeed uncontrollable. Not a malevolent power, though in practice it might work balefully: nor a benevolent power, though in fact it kept myriads in comfort who might otherwise have starved. Industrialism was morally neutral. Our age claims that it is controllable and ought to be controlled. But can that control be made effectual except by endowing the Sovereign—whatever form Sovereignty may take—with powers themselves beyond control? That I think is what certain bright young spirits have in mind when they tell me that nothing before 1939 really matters.

So far I am with them, if they mean that the canons and formulas of nineteenth-century Liberalism are not to be applied, just as they were, to the conditions of our own day, any more than we can use the methods of nineteenth-century rationalism in exploring the problems of our day. Those canons were grounded on the premiss that at any time there would be a number—and an always increasing number—of men and women interested in the ordering of public affairs, and able to make their interest felt: felt, not spasmodically at election time, but continuously: by reading, by discussion, by thinking things out for themselves and talking them over with their neighbours. But this premiss rested in turn on the assumption that the operations of government would always be within the comprehension of the sober citizen using diligence in his affairs, and that he would be interested because, if only as a contributor to public opinion, he felt that he could do something about them. What that Liberalism did not anticipate—could

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not anticipate—was that the increasing complexity, the mere range, of government would carry it beyond his comprehension: and that the volume of knowledge possessed by government puts its actions beyond the control of public opinion as that Liberalism conceived it: knowledge is power, and, as I have suggested, both the physical and psychological power of a modern government, wielded perhaps by a compact, resolute minority conscious of its purpose, might go far beyond the power of any despotism yet conceived. More than a hundred years ago James Mill wrote:

The principle of human nature on which the necessity of government is founded—the propensity of one man to possess himself of the objects of desire at the cost of another—leads on, by infallible sequence, not only to that degree of plunder which leaves the members (except the instruments and recipients) the bare means of subsistence, but to that degree of cruelty which is necessary to keep in existence the most intense terror.

The psychology may be as faulty as Macaulay showed it to be. But, is the picture altogether fantastic? And without going so far as Mill, might one not say that the propensity of one man to order others about leads on, if unrestrained, by infallible sequence, to that degree of apathy and indifference which leaves them without any interest in their own future? Among you there are no doubt some who in due course, and I hope at distant date, will be the subjects of biographies. Suppose the biographer, picking up my tag, asks what was happening in the world when our hero was twenty? Well, that is what is happening. It is very interesting. And what do you propose to do about it?

I was speaking just now of philosophies or inter-

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pretations of history, and none of them seems to me to be of the smallest account unless it is grounded on direct observation of what men in communities really do. Now, I have noticed in my journey through life a well-marked division of mankind into two groups or categories, cutting across our other distinction of the venturesome and the cautious. Something needs to be done—admitted. One group responds—then let us create an organization to do it. The other—let us provide facilities, and remove obstructions, so that people can do it for themselves, in their own way and at their own pace. And under a cross-fire from both sides you may here and there observe one of those tiresome cross-bench intelligences asking, 'Might we not first settle in which way it will be better done? Or even, one step farther back, what the *it* is which we are trying to do?' Just now the fire is heaviest from the side of the organizers, and being addicted to minorities I am sometimes inclined to take down one of the old fowling-pieces and see what I can do on the weaker side.

I spoke of culture as a body of assumptions, judgments, tastes, and habits, and these together form, as it were, a framework of reference in which, and by which, men of all avocations can communicate with one another. (Hence, in passing, comes the transcendent importance to a community of clear speech universally understood, and to the achievement of that purpose, if any better method has been discovered than the old discipline of Greek and Latin, it has not been revealed to me.) I have placed them in order of massiveness, and depth, which is the inverse order of mutability. I mean, a new invention like the cinema or motor coach may change the habits of a people overnight: tastes and judgments

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swing more slowly, and it may take the hard pounding of a repeated experience to modify an assumption. You have only to consider, as one instance, what the assumption of insular security meant to us for one generation after another. Or the moral and psychological assumption on which the family was reared. Or the assumption of a leisured class, exercising hospitality and serving the state at its own charge. Or that fundamental postulate of our political science, the superiority of representative institutions, wisely directed, over all other forms of government whatsoever. Consider how large a part of Victorian history can be deduced from those four assumptions, and is realized in the judgments, tastes, and habits issuing from them. How does it stand with them to-day? Well, two have gone, and another two are rocking. Then, *does* anything before 1939 matter? If I were looking only at this island of ours, I might not be quite sure.

But, not least, in its significance and strength, was the fifth assumption, that European civilization possessed a unique, exclusive, value for the world. To the eighteenth century, civilization meant France and England, with their foster-mother Italy, the Netherlands, and, already perhaps, the New England beyond the seas. The next age admitted Germany, and was somewhat puzzled what to do with Russia; and this federal notion of European culture, which came, for example, so naturally to the mind of Gibbon, was propagated into the nineteenth century, by reading and travel, not as an enjoined idea, but as a domestic habit, a family tradition. Some years ago I was looking through a library formed about 1865. I found a confession book kept by the young ladies of the house. One of the questions was,

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Who is your favourite German poet? and I noticed that it was always answered. Or think—at this hour a hundred years ago, how many English girls were reading Manzoni's *Promessi Sposi*, how many were reading Schiller, how many some carefully selected story by George Sand? No doubt Germany was unpractical; France immoral; Italy was insanitary as well. Still, they were all parts of one apprehensible whole, and the tokens of their ancient unity were visible. The temple at Brescia belongs to the same world as the theatre at Arles: the Gothic of Westminster is own sister to the Gothic of Beauvais: Wren and Gibbs are not unequally matched against Sammicheli and Vasari. All which again would be mere mystification unless it was set against its proper background, the history of the west and the history of its component states.

Now, in these last years, or even months, this assumption of a federated west has, under certain impacts which need not be specified, come to replace with us the exploded assumption of insularity. It is part of the endowment of this age. And already the organizers are at work. So may I say that until freedom of travel and freedom of exchange are restored to the west, the organizers will have very little except themselves to organize. I think if I had been asked when I was young to define the west, I should have said, 'the countries where you don't need a passport and where you can always cash a cheque', and a friend of mine who has a taste for such calculations assures me that if the Ruskin family decided on May 1 to go to Italy in their travelling-coach, and we decided on May 1 to go to Italy by train, the Ruskins would get there first. Our journey would be swifter, but the preliminaries would be so much longer.

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But suppose those restraints removed, and those facilities restored, how are you and I to make our citizenship of the west effectual? Suppose you had the ordering of the future, what would the west be like in twenty years from now? To come nearer home, what would Cambridge be like, or Oxford? Do you conceive it as the local branch of one all-embracing super-university, a chapter in that World Encyclopaedia of which Wells used to dream? Does not the mere contraction of the globe point that way? Or, remaining entirely free to teach what it likes, and how it likes, but linked, not under compulsion but of choice, with such other of the universities of the west as it may elect for its companions, they in their turn being linked with others, until the west, the spiritual west, Hesperia, is covered with a network of societies, all pursuing one aim, each cultivating its own garden, and exchanging friendly inquiries and friendly counsels over the wall? Does not the contraction of the globe point that way equally well? Is not the prospect more genial? Anyhow that is the way my imagination swerves—back to the schools of the Middle Ages, when I suppose any master in a recognized *Studium Generale* could present himself at any other and his right to be heard would be acknowledged. Some time before the war I received from Greifswald a book comparing the political development of England and Germany. I said, 'This man knows much more German history than I do, and I can hardly help knowing more English history than he does. What I should like would be to go to Greifswald as an Oxford Master of Arts, nail my theses on the gate of the university and challenge their masters to a friendly disputation.' Lately I have been in correspondence with a young

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historian in Göttingen. Do you know what they are talking about there? Dr. Arnold of Rugby, and the Christian Socialists, and Ludlow, and Charles Kingsley: they are tracing the influence of Frederick Denison Maurice on the trade-union legislation of 1875. And they are, I gather, turning away from the historical metaphysics, the pseudo-idealism which ramps in so much German work, to what, with some flattery perhaps, but far more of truth, they call the 'saner categories' of the English historians, of Maitland and Collingwood. I should like to take part in that conversation. Or must I wait till Unesco has organized a Congress? But, you see, I am not a Professor, so I am not likely to be invited. And when shall I be allowed to go to Moscow?

It is time to bring these roving fancies, if not to a conclusion, to an end. Of all the forms in which civilization or culture may present itself to the mind, the one which finds easiest admittance into mine is, the idea of the estate as something in which each generation has a life interest; something received with the incumbent duty of improvement and transmitted with the duty discharged. That is my conception, my definition of the continuity which we have been discussing. Here in England the conception found its most winning, its most splendid, and also its most natural embodiment, in the estate of country house and land: most natural because there it was grounded on, and reflected, the rhythmic continuity of seed-time and harvest, winter and summer: and, if you like, of hunting and fishing. And now that that world, and the hierarchy which governed and maintained it, have passed away beyond recall, I sometimes think that the idea is drifting hither and

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thither, looking for a new embodiment and another home.

Now it is a matter of history that, in our two great universities, learning and public service in church or state were, as I may say, integrated as they were nowhere else in the world. Hence the boundless influence they exercised in the State as in the Church: and hence also—what strikes me as even more remarkable and certainly less to be expected—the ease and good will with which they have adapted themselves to the changing structure of society. They are incomparably more representative of the nation as a whole than they were fifty years ago: and, at the same time, if I am any judge, they are more learned. Yet I do not feel that their self-identity, their distinguishing essence, has been impaired: and if I am right, then they are uniquely qualified to take up the succession, to carry forward that sense or instinct of continuity between past and future, the animating and directing principle of that hierarchy of which they were once part and are now the heirs.

I should say that, if I were thinking of this country only, because, for all my misgivings, I do still believe that the sense of continuity is an illuminating thing, the emotion of continuity an ennobling thing: and in those constantly recurring swerves and recoveries of which we were speaking just now, I find a proof that there is something there which human nature needs. But I am trying all the while to put myself in the new landscape of a federated west, and to see things in that perspective. And standing there I must assert that the historic view is not an amiable indulgence of human fancy, but a dominant and imperative necessity of thought. In fact, I would maintain that in the conditions under

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which we shall at no remote time be living it is more important to understand, to enter into, other people's past than our own. After all, we carry our own history about with us: we do not have to go back to the Restoration to understand why we revere the Crown, or to the Revolution to explain why we trust our judges. Enough that we do—enough for us. But the moment we step across the frontier, we find ourselves in a world where we need an interpreter: and though I should never reject such lights as the economist, the geographer, the naturalist may afford, it is to the historians we must go for the synthesis, and among the historians to those who know that their business is with men's 'common thought of common things', thought which must range more widely, as the things of its concern are of vaster extent.

I spoke a little while back of the universities of the west pursuing one aim. What is it? For my part I can only answer—to reformulate in this new context the liberal conception of public opinion, by the gradual building up of such a body of liberal knowledge, humane knowledge—if you like of social knowledge—as will serve to direct, to animate, and to control, those illimitable powers which science has put into the hands of mankind—and its rulers.

AT THE BAR OF HISTORY¹

ONE hundred and twenty years have just passed since Macaulay wrote, with that ringing vehemence which his public had already learnt to recognize:

History lies on the confines of two distinct territories. It is under the jurisdiction of two hostile powers; and, like other districts similarly situated, it is ill defined, ill cultivated, and ill regulated. Instead of being equally shared between its two rulers, the Reason and the Imagination, it falls alternately under the sole and absolute dominion of each. It is sometimes fiction. It is sometimes theory.

The perfect historian, so the young autocrat of the *Edinburgh Review* continues,

must possess an imagination sufficiently powerful to make his narrative affecting and picturesque. Yet he must control it so absolutely as to content himself with the materials which he finds, and to refrain from supplying deficiencies by additions of his own. He must be a profound and ingenious reasoner. Yet he must possess sufficient self-command to abstain from casting his facts in the mould of his hypothesis. Those who can justly estimate these almost insuperable difficulties will not think it strange that

in fact, there has never been a really good historian. The highest place was vacant.

In 1893 Macaulay's grand-nephew waited on Seeley, the Professor of History at Cambridge,

and the old man [he was under sixty but youth ignores such gradations] gave me, in a stern voice, a lecture on the theme

¹ A review of *An Autobiography and other Essays* by G. M. Trevelyan (Longmans)

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that history was a science and had nothing to do with literature: he told me that Carlyle and Macaulay were charlatans. Though I had not much sense in those days, I had just enough not to reply, but I went away boiling with rage—

the opening discharge in a controversy which in retrospect seems singularly futile and unnecessary. 'Consider, gentlemen, how many disputes you have listened to which were interminable because neither party understood the other, or himself.' And, while it may be fairly questioned whether the author of *Ecce Homo* knew what historic science was, it seems strange that Bury's devotion to Gibbon should have given him no clearer insight into the nature of historic art. But whatever the two might say, the third, the oracular third, had delivered judgment.

I remember a walk we had together, and the place on the Madingley road where Acton told me never to believe people when they depreciated my great-uncle, because, for all his faults, he was on the whole the greatest of all historians.

The highest place had been taken. And this was not a home-grown judgment only. Mommsen said much the same, and Döllinger, and Harnack.

What was it all about? What inspired the fierce reaction against History as Literature fifty years ago? The Master of Trinity suggests three motive forces. History, at the universities, was becoming a 'subject', even to the displacement of classics; and something rigorous, something craggy, had to be found to match the severity of the classical discipline. Something Teutonic, it might almost be said; because, in the second place, regard for German efficiency, a regard not unmingled with alarm, was beginning to affect not academic opinion only. If we did not openly confess it, secretly we were a little afraid.

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We were falling behind: we must strip, we must train: and, in this context, training meant, thirdly, the application to history of those methods by which the physical sciences were reshaping the world.

Now it may be granted that the assessment of evidence is a scientific proceeding, often a highly technical proceeding: a business for professional men working to professional standards. But when that work is completed and the inquirer is satisfied that all the available facts are there before him, what follows next? He may be satisfied by communicating his discoveries, his conclusions, to other learned men. Or he can withdraw into his library and write history. Very likely, as the Master of Trinity says, it will be no more than 'rough guessing'. But it will be his own guessing: and if guessing, directed by sympathy, insight, and imagination, and set out in due perspective, right proportion and apt language, is not literature, then the word requires a new defining.

There is, however, this much to be said for those old assailants of history as an art: that the literary qualities of Macaulay and Carlyle were, in their day, so overwhelming that their readers did not greatly care whether the guessing was right or wrong: to thousands *Past and Present* was like the first hearing of a great opera. And the word 'charlatan' no doubt was meant to lodge a suspicion in the young Trevelyan's mind that the writers did not greatly care either. Certainly neither of them would have been at home in the historic company desiderated by Gladstone, among 'men of slower pace, drier light, and more tranquil and comprehensive judgment'. No more would Tacitus. Now, a thesis on *Relegatio* would doubtless teach us something that we could not learn from the *Annals* or the *Histories*. But

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would it really tell us more than that miracle of sudden phrasing *plenum exiliis mare: infecti caedibus scopuli*? Which should we remember longest? Surely that matters too! And it will matter more and more as the tendency to substitute history for the classics as 'the perspective and common background in education' gains in strength. Dickens, commissioned by Macready to find a school for his son, chose one where 'they read the great Greek and Roman books'. To know the classics was still the test and proof of a good education. We, living in the evening twilight of the Renaissance, must prepare ourselves for another test and another proof, and why should it not be: 'They read the great historians'? And remember them, and return to them, 'keeping up' their history as their sires 'kept up' their classics?

Suppose the transition completed, and history acknowledged

not as the rival of the classics, or of modern literature, or of the political sciences, but rather as the house in which they all dwell: the cement that holds together all the studies relating to the nature and achievements of man.

How are the historians to be trained for their task? That Dr. Trevelyan will be recognized as the foremost figure in that transition few will deny. And how was he trained? By hard reading: by knowing Maitland and Cunningham and Acton: by resolving, some day, to write the Reign of Queen Anne: by writing a dissertation on the Peasants' Rising: by shaking off

the impalpable restrictions of the Cambridge ethos. The wise Henry Sidgwick said to me that if I wanted to write books as my chief work I had better not stay too long in academic circles.

'And so, as I could afford to be out of a paid job,

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I left Cambridge', to write *England under the Stuarts*, and *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic*, 'working like one possessed and driven by a fierce imaginative excitement': and, in the intervals, walking, also like one possessed, by Offa's dyke and the Scottish borders, in Tirol and the Carpathians, or by

some roadless Swiss pass into Italy. The long pull up past the wooden chalets, through the deep snows and fir trees, and then the joyous run down through woodland paths to the ancient Alpine cities of Italy was a game I loved to play.

Dr. Trevelyan's work is the fruit of leisure, of freedom, of independence. Leisure enforced, sometimes, as when the war of 1914 carried him again to Italy, to the mountains of the north, and the rout of Caporetto. And even that was turned to account, because 'it had given me a glimpse of history in the making: it helped to free me from some party prejudices, and from too easy an historical optimism'. But who in this levelled and impoverished land of ours, with its crowded universities, can ever again hope to enjoy a life and a discipline so rich and stirring, so exciting in youth, so satisfying in retrospect? Certainly it would be a tragic mischance if at the moment when the study of history, and the reading and writing of history, were becoming indispensable elements in the formation of a new, European, culture, the opportunities of writing history extended no farther than to the composition of a thesis, and the historians were left with no higher aim than to teach the teachers of history how to teach their successors. Some day, looking back, we may see that the problem of our time was to recover for the humanities as a whole something of that domestic familiarity, that man-of-the-worldness, which once

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peopled the classics with living men, and went, we might say, to ancient history for its political jurisprudence, and to English history for its political case-law. And for the solution of that problem it is to the universities that we must look. They alone can provide the initial discipline, the academic discipline, which is now an essential part of the historian's equipment. That is their duty to the generations, in their sequence, of young scholars. But it is not the whole of their duty. There is something else. What is it?

Among the essays which the Master of Trinity has reprinted with his Autobiography there is one, on the Two Party System in English History, first read as a lecture on the Romanes foundation in Oxford, which opens a new window on our political landscape:

We are only at the beginning of serious research into the party system as an institution in English life, although our histories are full of the doings of those two parties at Westminster. The proper study of the party system would take us far beyond the four walls of Parliament. It would trace the roots of party allegiance and enmity in the local life and circumstance of each shire, town and district: it would delve into the history of the East India Company, the Bank of England, the origins of journalism, the rivalries of opposing systems of law; it would be deeply concerned with English religion and with English scepticism; with the relation of landlord and tenant, employer and employed, with the rivalry of old and new wealth, of town and country, and with a hundred other aspects of daily life. In short, the history of party, if ever it came to be fully written, would be a new method of approach to English history as a whole.

No one can doubt that these words are as true as they are timely. The closing down, one by one, of the great houses of England, and therewith the

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evacuation of their muniments, is putting at the disposal of students a mass of documents dealing with the incidents, aspects, and relations, out of which that history will have to be written. And once set out, the student will find that, broad as it is, Dr. Trevelyan's landscape is no more than a sector of the whole. People, after all, spend very little of their time in thinking about politics. But the time they do not spend may settle what their politics will be: and for that time, and what our ancestors did with it, the scholar must search an area as large as human life.

These houses are commonly, and rightly, thought of as monuments of architectural design and domestic taste. Their setting, their furnishing, are a constant delight to increasing numbers of visitors. But they are far more than that. They were, often they still are, the homes of families, linked at every turn with the process of English history. To the student there is no keener delight than to trace these links in the very place where they were forged, in the libraries and muniment rooms of our great houses: to lift a tired eye from some crinkled parchment and see before him oaks which were not young when that parchment was engrossed. This perpetual interweaving of the domestic and the national record gives dignity to one, intimacy to the other, and to both a charm which has often carried the student over the drier wastes in his journey to some discovery all the more delightful because it had been waiting for him, in the same place, all those years. What the famous houses of England—and of Scotland and Wales—did in their day for the arts in Britain is an old and famous story. In the coming time they may have as much to do for history, by calling in the craftsman to preserve and order their historic treasures, as they

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once called in the painter and the landscape gardener. And in so doing they will earn the gratitude of scholars, not in this island only, bent on the ceaseless and continuing quest of historic truth.

Hallam said that we could never hope to reconstruct a day in the life of a mediaeval village. In his *Life on the English Manor* Mr. Bennett has done it with such skill and charm that it looks quite easy. But—twenty years' work went to the writing of those twenty pages, and what has become of it? Scholars admire it, students digest it. But how far does it travel? Has any village ever taken it as the theme and groundwork of a pageant? The English have often been charged with lack of historic memory. But what opportunities do they have of exercising, of cultivating, of awakening that memory? The classical discipline shaped the minds of a ruling class: the Biblical discipline furnished a bond of union, a mode of serious communication, for a still restricted electorate. Who will take in hand to make history serve the same purpose for our democracy? We have had inquiries, we have had reports. But the fact remains that to the people at large the history of England is a book with few remembered pages; the history of foreign countries is a book unopened. Yet no one can doubt that history does acquire a new and startling vividness when once the reader, or hearer, can say 'It happened here; it might have happened to us'. In the history of which Dr. Trevelyan was speaking, there will be something for everybody, everywhere: and that is the ground on which the historians of the new time must build, if history is in truth to be a discipline and not merely a subject.

'They read the great Greek and Roman books.' In other words, they keep good company. And is

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there, when all is said and done, any better way of acquiring a sound historic judgment than keeping company with the great historians? Is there not a danger that the professional approach, the constant labour towards exactitude and completeness, may induce a certain myopia? And, if it be so, is not the remedy to be found in a larger acquaintance with the masterpieces of historic art?

I have never made a special study of the French Revolution [so Dr. Trevelyan writes], but of the books I have read the two greatest seem to me to be Carlyle's work and Albert Sorel's *Europe and the French Revolution*, written two generations later, in the light of all the historical knowledge that Carlyle lacked.

From the depths of his immense knowledge he draws up sure and definite judgments, mostly of condemnation. He is confident that the Terror which destroyed the brightest hopes of the Revolution was unnecessary for its defence. To him the true heroes of the epoch are the soldiers of the first Revolutionary armies. The more strongly does he feel the tragedy of the misuse of their splendid patriotism to revive the policies of Louis XIV and rob and torture Europe for twenty years. Of course there are other great qualities in Sorel's work, but . . . I wish to lay stress on this Rhadamanthine quality of his; it is like history herself speaking from the judgment seat. Sorel is the modern Thucydides.

That was nobly spoken. And it leaves us, perhaps, asking whether, to-day, the highest and most necessary duty of the historian be not to infuse into the popular judgment of current events the integrity with which the historic judgment pronounces on the past. That is the end: and the beginning must be the truth, well told, about the things that happened here.

BASIC

WHAT is Language?

Primarily, a system of sounds by which we convey to one another observations, warnings, and injunctions:

1. Look at that black dog.
 2. Mind that dog: he will bite you.
 3. Don't tease the dog.
-
1. He isn't black: he is dark grey.
 2. No he won't: he knows me quite well.
 3. I'm not teasing him: I'm only playing with him.

From which simple operations, by expansion and interlacing, proceed all narrative, all argument, all exhortation: that is to say, all history, philosophy, and rhetoric.

It follows that an ideal language would have:

(1) A name for every thing, and for every activity, which is likely to come under the notice of those who use the language. As the scirocco does not blow in England, we need no word for scirocco. As there are no sheep in Arctic lands, the Esquimaux have no word for lamb, and have to speak of God's Little Seal.

(2) Such a system of connecting usages as will enable the speaker to convey any relationship he may have in mind when he speaks about the things, or the activities. These relationships are either external and logical—between the things themselves: or

else internal and emotional—between the things and the speaker:

The cat has killed that rat.

The cat *has* killed that rat!

The usages, therefore, are either syntactical, and easily recorded in writing: or else vocal—matters of emphasis and cadence—of which only a few, strongly marked and regularly recurring, can be so set down: by underlining, for example, or by notes of exclamation, interrogation, or quotation. But the greater part of them cannot be so registered, and must be supplied by the reader out of his general understanding of the context.

Now, since it may be assumed that all languages have names for most things and activities, it follows that the distinguishing element in any particular language is its system of connecting usages: and the richer, the subtler, the more flexible, this system is, the more adequate will the language be. For example, it is an admitted poverty in English that we have no future for *can*; no good impersonal corresponding to *man* or *on*; and no neat way of distinguishing *oratio obliqua* from *oratio recta*. The classical languages and German can employ the accusative and infinite, or the subjunctive: a French newspaper can say:

Affreuse affaire! Curé aura mangé deux vicaires!

while we are constrained to use the periphrasis:

Vicar alleged to have eaten two curates!

How diverse and intricate these connexions are, can be made clear by one simple observation. Take

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the world of spatial relations, represented in speech by prepositions. It might have been expected that all languages would have much the same system of registration. Yet the fact is quite otherwise. I cannot think of any preposition in one language which means the same as the nearest corresponding preposition in another, neither more nor less. What is the Latin for *off*? Or the French? What is the English for *apud* or *um* or *auprès de*? The prepositional system in Greek and Russian, both being highly inflected languages, has a remarkable general similarity. It is when you try to match *ἐν* with *po*, or a compound in *περί* with one in *pere*, that the differences assert themselves. I think I could make a foreigner understand why to say of a man that he lives at London strikes us as comic. The reason is that we necessarily think of London as an extended area. Whether you say at Norwich or in Norwich depends on whether you see it as an area or a point. But we should all say: 'This train stops at Norwich, and the only reason why we don't ask whether it stops at London is, I suppose, that, as the porter said, there would be a hell of a bump, mum, if she didn't.

What is true of the spatial relations of things is equally true, I think, of the temporal and modal relations of activities expressed by verbs. Anyone who in his youth has grappled with Greek conditional and dependent clauses, or, later, with the aspects of a Russian verb, will have realized that even the logical attitude, so to speak, towards such seemingly elementary conceptions as past, present, and future, may differ widely in different languages. How did the Romans contrive to rear the almost algebraical elegance of their sequences on an aorist which also had to do duty as a perfect? Why do French and

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German both use the perfect as an aorist? In an ideal language should we say

I saw him yesterday

or

I him have seen yesterday

or

I have him yesterday seen ?

It is a commonplace of linguistics that the English language has a uniquely rich and subtle verbal system: almost as if, by shedding its old inflexions, it had conserved its sap to grow new branches. I remember a conference on Anglistic some years ago, at which one of the speakers, a professor from, I think, Marburg, held up the sentence

She was handed a chair

as the last triumph, the limiting instance, of linguistic flexibility. I have often thought how difficult a foreigner must find it to frame his tongue or his mind to such conditionals as *If I hadn't missed that train, I might have been eating my supper now*, as distinguished from *If I hadn't missed that train, I should be eating my supper now*. Or this: *Not but what he could have been seen slipping away, if anyone had been looking out for him*. But, as we know, children weave their way through these thickets as naturally as little Arabs pick up the three—or is it four?—gutturals which hardly any adult European can acquire. These connecting usages are the common property of all ranks, the literate and the illiterate, those of large vocabularies and those of small. And that they really are felt to be the central strand in the language is shown by the energy with which English people impose them on a foreign tongue. Everybody must have

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heard some English traveller, with limited French, endeavouring to express himself in some such way as

Si vous n'étiez pas une bête, vous auriez été pouvoir
savoir que je serais κτλ.

Along with this, and perhaps psychologically connected with it, goes a remarkable facility and resourcefulness in creating verbs: to chair, to table, to field, to gate, to floor, to wall (I once heard to bonify, from bona fide pronounced bonified and conceived as a past participle). Now it is, I think, generally admitted that the advance of the noun at the expense of the verb is a sign of linguistic decay, and the reason is obvious. Verbs, as Aristotle said, are in time. Nouns are out of time. An excessive reliance on the noun, therefore, will in the end detach the mind of the speaker from the realities of here and now, from when and how and in what mood the thing was done, and insensibly induce a habit of abstraction, generalization, and vagueness. But vagueness and good speech are in the nature of things incompatible, since the final cause of speech is to get an idea as exactly as possible out of one mind into another: and its formal cause therefore is such choice and disposition of words as will achieve this end most economically.

By this arrangement, no one need mount more than two flights to reach his front door.

That is good speech, because, with a moderate but sufficient draft on the visual imagination, it gets the whole story across in familiar words. Nobody who heard it would ask for it to be repeated, and most people could carry it in their memories as a message should be carried, with nothing added or left out.

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The object of this arrangement is to limit to two floors the height to which it is necessary to ascend in order to reach the front door,

is bad speech, because few of us could be quite sure, on a single hearing, of getting the meaning right—still less, of repeating the sentence correctly as a message.

If I can trust my own recollections, and such observations as I have been able to make, I should say that English children—those I mean who are brought up in homes where English is well spoken—begin by acquiring the system of syntactical connexions, the idiom, which with us is centred on the verb, and then fill it out as their vocabulary increases. One method of language-teaching, the Prendergast Mastery System, which had a considerable vogue in the later nineteenth century, was founded on this natural process: the pupil was made to begin with verbal phrases *Pourquoi n'avez vous pas voulu . . .* and to repeat them until they came as easy as *Why didn't you tell me that you couldn't wait?*, or the like, comes to an English child. Whether this is a sound method with older pupils, and particularly with adults, teachers of language must say. I certainly wish that it had been practised on me: I might have learnt, what I never shall, the proper order of words in a French negative question employing a compound verb. But surely it is clear that—when once the stage of mere naming is past: pussy, daddy, tummy ache—we proceed to phrases, and arrive at words by analysis and comparison. Recently I had a letter from a correspondent, unknown to me, which well illustrates the mischief of reversing this natural procedure. At his school, the order of the day was to learn Vocabulary I and then tackle Exercise I. This he could never

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do. Like most children (as I guess) he found it more natural to begin with the sentence *Columba volat super silvam* and then find out what it was that did what where. First the phrase, then the word. First the syntax, in time, then the vocabulary, out of time. But the unhappy child was made to feel that this was cheating.

Perhaps I may here relate a performance of my own childhood. I was, I am told, backward in learning to speak, passed very quickly through the phase of baby talk, and then surprised, and doubtless gratified, my parents by the wealth of my vocabulary. This is how I did it. Every night, tucked up, I used to assemble my Council, headed by my particular friend the butcher in his blue overalls. They questioned me minutely on the doings of the day, and the rule of the game was that every night we agreed on certain taboo words, always verbs. Then they put questions 'involving the use of', as the grammar books say, the forbidden vocables, and I had to dodge them. Finally, to corner me, they would ask what I meant by the word I did use, and I would whip out something I had just picked up from the elders, and so break through the net.

All that I have been saying relates to natural language, which is constructed, progressively, by the conversation of those who have heard it from infancy; and imparted to foreigners by way of lessons. In such language, as we know, the vocabulary is constantly changing. Words fall out of use altogether, new words are coined or adopted, and what is even more important, the meaning and status of words change: the colloquial becomes literary, the literary

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becomes colloquial: words of excellent descent go down in the world:

porro aliud clarescit et e contemptibus exit;

the idiom of one generation may to another sound pompous, pedantic, affected, or vulgar. By natural acquisition we keep pace with these changes in the lexicon, just as we adjust our speech to the less noticeable changes in syntax. Down to the middle of the nineteenth century, *the house is being built* was hardly admissible: the elder generation would insist upon *the house is building*. Their children shook off the yoke, and the language was enriched by a present passive participle. We are to-day witnessing—however greatly some of us may deplore it—another change of syntax: the obliteration of that subtle distinction of *will* and *shall* which for generations was the mark of English birth, and which can only be observed by those to whom it is native.

The great objections to a purely artificial language are: first, that there is no general body of speakers by whom the acceptance and rejection of words and phrases can be decided: second, that the grammar cannot possibly anticipate the whole syntactical range of connecting usages which in practice may be found necessary. Let it be granted, for example, that the artificial language has a word for seven, for eight, and for half. Do you then say half-past seven, as in English: seven hours and half as in French: half eight as in German, or half of eighth as in Russian? The simplest conceivable phrase, *le sel est sur le roc*, which opened my first French grammar, is subject to such idiomatic variation. It goes

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literally into English and German. But Latin has no article, and Russian has neither article nor copula.

The artificial language, therefore, would be a system of symbols such as is used in various sciences and professions, where the number of logical relationships is limited, and the emotional relationships do not matter. An Italian railway manager, for example, once told me that he could dispatch a train from Reggio to Hamburg, and, by chalk-marks understood throughout the transport world, be sure that various wagons would be detached at the right junction, and sent to Laibach, Innsbruck, Cracow, and Ostend, as the case might be. Where these limitations apply, where, that is to say, the communication is from one professional man to another on the subject of their common profession, it would not be difficult to construct an adequate code, with a central office to issue supplements from time to time as new things or new relationships needed to be expressed. But the users of this code would translate it, mentally, each into his own language, and employ their own language in communicating with non-professionals.

Let us suppose now that, instead of constructing an artificial code language, we take an existing language and try to make it serve the purposes of a code. In the first place it is clear that the attitude of the native speaker, and of the foreigner, to such a language will be entirely different. With a purely artificial language, like Esperanto or Novial, we all start level—with perhaps a certain advantage on the side of the Romance-speakers. If the groundwork of our natural-code language were, say, French, the Frenchman would begin with the great advantage of knowing all the words. But on the other side he would be heavily handicapped by the embarrassment

of not knowing which of them were allowed, and which were improper. At every moment the native speaker of a natural-code language will have to remember, not only the 1,000 words, or whatever the number may be, which he may use, but the 12,000 or 14,000 which he may not. Perhaps as a feat of virtuosity some few people might acquire this curious accomplishment, and by practice keep it in mind. But the great majority would always be spilling over into their natural speech, and, to that extent, would be unintelligible to the foreign speaker.

Assume this difficulty overcome, and the constricted vocabulary firmly impressed on our Frenchman's memory. Then, since ordinarily he wants, let us say 10,000 words, to make himself understood by, or to understand, his fellow countrymen, the 1,000 words of Basic French will have to do duty for all the others, by means of combinations which are wholly unnatural to him—if they were natural he would have made them himself. The result is bound to be ludicrous, to the French ear or eye, just as the first efforts of a foreigner in our own tongue are ludicrous, and for a corresponding reason. We have to use the words we know, whether they are the right ones or not, to make up for those we do not know: like the Russian lady who once in my hearing spoke of the Swedish Guards 'in their winter clothes of mutton-fur'. And as everyone who has had the experience knows, the result very commonly is that we do not succeed in saying what we mean. We say what we have words for, which may be something quite different. The narrow path between high hedges takes us where it goes, and not at all where we want to go. And so far as I have observed, I think the

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tendency is to hop or scramble from noun to noun, blocking out some kind of meaning, using the verbs, more or less at random, as so many connecting particles, and giving to the whole the turn and colour of our native idiom.

The child learns his own language haphazard, what he is positively taught being only a small part of what he learns, by listening and experiment. His course is not set out or graded: he has no more difficulty in giving his address as 137 Wellingborough Avenue than in saying 1 Cat Street. He does not proceed from easy to difficult idioms, and, by six or seven, he finds it equally natural to say, *That is my ball* and *If I had known we should be going where we found the blackberries yesterday, I would have brought my pail.*

But the foreign pupil—whether young or old—has to linger over the phase of pure naming and has few opportunities of acquiring any idioms beyond those set down in his successive tasks. When, at thirty-five, I began to study Russian I was warned that if I really acquired ten words a day, I should have done well, and I found by experience that this modest standard was not easy to reach and maintain. But as soon as I was through the pussy-daddy stage, I certainly found that I made greater progress by plunging at once into whole sentences, and enlarging my vocabulary, both word and idiom, by the process I have called analysis and comparison, thus following, as I suppose, the course I had taken in learning English, making as it were a hypothesis as to the meaning of each phrase, and then testing it by looking up the unknown word in a dictionary, or asking my elders what it meant. I remember, too,

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that when my last examination was behind me, and I sat down to read my favourite classics for fun, I was surprised by the unexpected clarity and vividness of the text, when I was no longer under the obligation of finding an English equivalent for each Greek or Latin word in isolation. To the limits of my knowledge, I was reading them as a Greek or Roman boy might.

Basic is an attempt to construct a code-language out of English. And its authors begin, one may say, by standing the real language on its head: or, perhaps, turning it inside out. The strength and the wealth of the natural language lie in the volume and variety of its verbal forms. Basic employs only eighteen verbs, and makes good the defect by means of a system of verbal phrases consisting of an auxiliary verb or 'operator' and a noun.

All the disciples were in fear of putting the question
"Who are you?" being conscious that it was the
Lord

is English, though very bad English. But

Yes, Lord you have knowledge that you are dear
to me

is not English at all, any more than

Vous avez connaissance que vous êtes cher à moi

is French, or

Habes scientiam quod mihi carus es

is Latin.

For whom then is it intended? For foreigners, and for such English people as may have to converse with foreigners trained to speak Basic. Now, the

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foreigner whose intercourse is likely to be limited to English Basic-speakers, will be a rare bird. Arrived at Dover, he will probably be able to make himself understood. But so do thousands of passengers who have not learnt Basic. And when he buys a paper and starts reading, the first article will show him how much he still has to learn. A great part of the vocabulary will be unknown to him.

That is, of course, a common experience with us all. Short of becoming bilingual, we never overtake the whole vocabulary of a foreign tongue. We learn mainly by reading, through a process of concentric acquisition just as a tree adds rings to its girth each year. But the Frenchman sitting in the train to Victoria will soon find, as he reads or tries to follow the conversation of his companions, that he not only has much to learn: he has much to unlearn. What he has been taught is not introductory to what he still has to acquire. It is a system of dodges to avoid the difficulty of acquisition. And the more trouble he has taken to master the dodges, the more thorough and fluent his Basic is, the farther he will be from ever speaking or understanding real English.

But I am taking a favourable case. I am assuming that my Frenchman has mastered Basic to the degree which makes an Englishman a 'good speaker' of German or Italian. Such a 'good speaker' falls very far short of the native in range, accuracy, and fluency of speech: in idiom and accent. But how many of us reach even that standard? By parity of reasoning it is safe to assume that for one 'good Basic-speaker' there will be a dozen at various degrees of competence or incompetence. How can it be otherwise? In the nature of things they can have, out of school, very little practice: there will be no body of Basic-

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speakers to whom they can refer (thus repeating the objection to all artificial languages); and most assuredly there can be no Basic literature (conceive, if you can, a literature with no word for *to ask* or *to know*). Now the relation between 'French'—Fourth-Form French—and 'good French' in that modest degree, which is as far as most of us can ever hope to get, is that the one can, with care, pains, study, and practice, be improved into the other; and in turn, though very rarely, 'good French' may be improved into a fair imitation of real French. But the best Basic can never be improved into real English, because it begins by cutting away the mainstay of our tongue—the verb. What sort of lingo then will the speaker of Fourth-Form Basic ever achieve? He will have a certain hoard of nouns, and the chances are, I should guess, a hundred to one that in practice he will link them in accordance with the idiom of his own language mixed up with what he remembers of the rules of Basic. Whether he ends up by saying, for 'I asked him',

I put question on him

or

I made question at him

really doesn't matter. Both are intelligible, and neither is English. We are in fact back at the code-language, which every speaker reads off in accordance with the idiom of his own tongue.

There are therefore two questions. First, is Basic a good code? As I defined it above, a code is a system of communication between professional men on professional matters, and whether Basic is a good instrument for an English architect to use in explaining the

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replanning of Southampton to a Swede, or an Indian in describing the lay-out of a munition factory to a Chinese, architects must say. Clearly the Basic core of words would have to be greatly extended to cover the things which as architects they would observe and wish to convey. Another professional vocabulary would be required for doctors—another for geologists—another for chemists, and so forth: just as they now require their technical symbols.

But consider the architect who wishes to convey, not the statistics of a building, but its historic significance and aesthetic value. Here, I think, the case for Basic has been prejudiced by the outrageous claims of its own promoters. What are they? That a pupil who in two years, being of average ability, might be able to read straightforward narrative in French, will, by studying four little Basic books of fifty pages each, be able to 'discuss business and industrial organization, science and literature, history and politics'. With whom? With me for example? I spend a good deal of my time discussing administrative organization, history, and politics, for which purpose I need (so I am told: I have never counted) about 15,000 words. Of course, among those 15,000 there are 850, or 1,000, or 1,500 which I use most frequently, among them being a very large number of verbs. But I cannot possibly restrain my thinking to 1,500 words: and there is one question I have always wanted to put to the exponents of Basic. Is it a language which you can and do think in? But you, I must further remark, presumably speak at least Higher Certificate Basic, perhaps Fellowship Basic. What about those others who shamble along in Fourth Form Basic, and they after all will be the multitude?

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To put it another way. One can only think with the whole of the language available at any moment, which whole is constantly enlarged by opportunity of hearing and reading, and consolidated by opportunity of speaking and writing. I thus come to my second question. Is Basic a good introduction to the real English which my architect, for example, will require if he wishes to explain to his Swedish colleague the influence of Geoffrey Scott on modern architectural thought, or the place of Sir Edward Lutyens in architectural practice? When I wrote on this subject first, in 1941, I received many letters from teachers of language. All, without reserve, answered No: it is not a good introduction. Basic gives no opportunity of enlargement, and no inducement to enlarge. Having learnt

I have knowledge that you are dear,

not knowing that to any English ear it is grotesque, but finding that it does convey a meaning, why should the pupil encumber his memory with a mass of verbs? But that mass of verbs, with their extraordinary range of syntactical manipulation, is the centre and strength of the language. That is what the pupil, ambitious to discuss 'industrial organization, science and literature, history and politics', must acquire. It is no answer to say that one or two experts who have nothing else to do but improve their Basic can produce a rendering of the Atlantic Charter into something which looks rather like English. A candidate in Honour Mods could do it into something which to a Roman would have sounded about as much like Latin. But what would the Fourth Form make of it? A Chinese Fourth Form will inevitably fall back on Chinese idiom: a Bantu on Bantu. That

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they will be able to communicate with one another on a limited range of subjects interesting to both their good selves, I do not doubt, though really I think they might do it better if they practised the idiom of Mr. Jingle in *The Pickwick Papers*. That, in any real sense of the word, they will be able to *discuss* them, I do most confidently deny.

Let us see at what conclusion we have arrived :

(1) Any speech which exaggerates the part of the noun at the expense of the verb, as Basic does, is, by definition, bad speech.

(2) The strength of English lying in the verb, Basic is in a peculiar degree a deformation of English speech.

(3) It will therefore give the pupil an altogether misleading notion of real English.

(4) Its inadequate syntax will drive the learner back on the syntax of his own speech, thus creating what might be called Fourth Form *prākritis*, and limiting its utility even as a code.

(5) Its narrow vocabulary makes it unserviceable as an instrument of discussion, outside a strictly limited range of professional or business communication. Even within that range it will need to be supplemented by special, or technical, vocabularies.

If that were all, Basic might be left to sink or swim, and, on one condition, I should watch its progress with interest and impartiality. But that condition is essential: to violate it might be deadly. It is—that English speakers should not be introduced to Basic until their own habits of speech are completely formed, and they can recognize Basic for what it is—a code composed by the constriction and deforma-

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tion of the English language: a stunted acrobat, whose contortions may be excused, laughed at, or pitied, but are certainly not to be imitated by those who are born to the free enjoyment of their natural strength.

NEWMAN AGAIN

ONCE for some dreary and self-denying purpose I read many books on education—not method, which is not my concern, or the psychology of childhood, which interests me deeply, but Education with a big and gloomy E. I came to the conclusion that if two were kept, the rest might, with no loss to humanity and possibly some advantage, be pulped. Because these two go to the point and stay there: the point being, what are you after with all this teaching, and preaching, and training? With your rewards and punishments, your social pressure and economic inducements, your praise and blame? What are you trying to do, or, better still, to make? What product does your art profess to deliver? Is it attractive? Is it estimable? Is it useful to society as it is, or likely by influence, or direction, or example, to improve society? Above all, is it worth while to the product's self? And unless you can answer that question, it seems to me you had better hold your tongue.

One of these books is Aristotle's *Ethics*, and the other is Newman's nine discourses on *The Idea of a University*. In the first four he is in the cell, speaking, we may say, confessionally; and though they contain passages which—like the descant on the Papacy in the First Discourse, on the attributes of the Creator in the Third, and on the Fine Arts in the Fourth—are unrivalled in English for the simplicity of their means and the majesty of their effect, yet, their

doctrine being based on an assumption which must either be taken as of faith or set aside as unproved, many readers may find them unattractive and in places repellent. They are addressed to fellow Catholics, and addressed, it must be borne in mind, by an alien, a recent convert, an already suspected man. Reading them again against the biographical background depicted in Dr. Tardivel's full and well-documented study,¹ I understood better than before the peculiar vehemence and urgency of those opening discourses on the place of Theology in a University. Newman is not only pleading a cause: he is pleading his own right to be heard. And even if there had been anyone to listen to him, the Irish Bishops were determined that he should not. In Ireland, I gather, he is still denounced as an enemy of the Irish race: and there are passages in the Discourses, like the panegyric on the English public schools and the men they bred,

heroes and statesmen, literary men and philosophers, men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, for cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is,—able to subdue the earth,

which must make us, if we remember they were delivered in Dublin within a few years of the great famine and while the great migration was in progress, admire the self-restraint of the audience as much as the eloquence of the speaker. Tact was not Newman's strong suit.

But in the Fifth Discourse he steps into the daylight and speaks to the world. And the sum of what

¹ *J. H. Newman: Educateur* par Fernande Tardivel (Gabriel Beauchesne et ses fils, Paris)

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he has to say is this: There are all the special sciences which advance knowledge; there are all the arts and professions which, by applying knowledge, make things. But above these is the Science of Sciences, or Philosophy, which, because it is the peculiar possession of the educated man, it is the peculiar function of a University to impart.

An assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation. They learn to respect, to consult, to aid each other.

(As a description of Oxford during the heat of the Tractarian controversy, this benign picture is not without its humour.)

Thus is created a pure and clear atmosphere of thought, which the student also breathes, though in his own case he only pursues a few sciences out of the multitude. He profits by an intellectual tradition, which is independent of particular teachers, which guides him in his choice of subjects, and duly interprets for him those which he chooses. He apprehends the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and shades, its great points and its little, as he otherwise cannot apprehend them. Hence it is that his education is called 'Liberal'. A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom—

(the speaker cannot be charged with drawing his own intellectual portrait)

—or what I have ventured to call a philosophical habit. . . . And now the question is asked me, What is the *use* of it?

Let us leave the answer for a moment, and, without stopping to inquire whether any University ever did, does, or will come up to these requirements,

let us remember that Newman has all the time in view the practical object of raising the Catholic upper classes, in Ireland, but not in Ireland only—his imagination ranged over the whole English-speaking world to which Dublin was to be what Athens had been to Greece—to the intellectual level of the English Protestant upper classes: to fit them for their duties as ‘men of the world, statesmen, landowners, and opulent gentlemen’ (the innuendo, that they were not fit, being, no doubt, vastly agreeable to their ears). In other words, he is laying down the form of mind proper to an aristocracy. He is trying to *make* something, to determine an idea, and create an institution with which to realize it.

But observe next the limits within which the idea is elaborated. Sharply and emphatically, he distinguishes this philosophy from the pervading habit of ‘viewiness’, engendered and encouraged by journalism, or the trick of propounding bright generalizations on every topic, of which Brougham, ‘half knowing everything from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth out of the wall’, was the most conspicuous exemplar. On the other side, he holds out no hopes that it will do more than it promises: it is a form of mind, and cannot affect the quality of mind as given by Nature. But it is the form common to all men ‘who have once grasped the difference between knowledge and not-knowledge, and have thoroughly mastered the methods of reasoning, of getting from point to point, in their own branch of study, making their communications with each other prompt, easy, and certain: unencumbered by the misunderstandings and ambiguities, and unobstructed by the kinks and opacities, of the untrained mind.

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I hold very strongly that the first step in intellectual training is to impress on a boy's mind the idea of science, method, order, principle, and system: of rule and exception: of richness and harmony. Let him once gain this habit of method, of starting from fixed points, of making his ground sure as he goes, of distinguishing what he knows from what he does not know, and I conceive he will be gradually initiated into the largest and truest philosophy. . . . Moreover, such knowledge is not a mere extrinsic or accidental advantage, which is ours to-day and another's tomorrow, which may be got up from a book, and easily forgotten again, which we can command or communicate at our pleasure, which we can borrow for the occasion, carry about in our hand, and take into the market; it is an acquired illumination, it is a habit, a personal possession, and an inward endowment.

All which, and the form of mind that contains them, Newman holds—thus answering his own question—to be a good in itself: just as, for example, health and a clear enunciation are good in themselves, quite apart from their utility if a sentence of hard labour had to be served, or a position is being sought where B.B.C. vowels are, as the advertisements say, essential. And in the following discourses he employs all his magic to enlarge and refine and exalt this conception of intellectual cultivation as a good in itself, worth while for itself, to be prized and esteemed for itself beyond all knowledge and all professional skill; while, all the time, so earnestly does he affirm its inadequacy, its shortcomings on the moral side, its need to be steadied and purified by religion, that at the end we feel that what we have heard is the final utterance, never to be repeated or needing to be supplemented, of Christian Humanism: as if the spirit evoked by Erasmus had found its voice at last.

CLASSICAL CRITICISM¹

I

ON September 16, 1762, Captain Gibbon of the South Hants Grenadiers—*falces conflamus in enses*—started his verbs in μ and his first chapter of Longinus. Loitering on the way to read the *Ciceronianus* of Erasmus, by October 3 he had reached Chapter ix, on which he enters this judgment in his journal:

Till now, I was acquainted only with two ways of criticizing a beautifull passage; the one, to shew, by an exact anatomy of it, the distinct beauties of it, and whence they spring; the other, an idle exclamation, or a general encomium, which leaves nothing behind it. Longinus has shewn me that there is a third. He tells me his own feelings upon reading it; and tells them with such energy, that he communicates them.

Generalize this pronouncement, or extend it from passages to books, and you have an excellent instruction to critics. We do not want idle exclamation. We do want exact anatomy, and when, by your anatomy, you have secured our confidence in your professional skill, then we shall be very glad to know your feelings on the whole matter. But not before.

Something lately set me reading Lysias, and I went on to see what Dionysius of Halicarnassus had to say about him. I do not mean to match Dionysius against Longinus, or to weigh their gifts in the balance. But the *Judicium de Lysia* is certainly an admirable example of professional competence in the

¹ First published in *Essays and Studies*, vol. xxiii (Oxford, 1938)

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critical field. If you read it first, you would know exactly what to expect in the author. If you read Lysias first, you would find in Dionysius your own general view articulated, and your appreciation clarified, and grounded on precise observation.

Dionysius has a practical object in view. He is thinking of pupils going out into a world where they will have to appear in courts, draft letters from one city to another, or petitions to the Roman Senate, and deliver addresses of welcome to Caesar or his legates. If otherwise inclined, they may compose philosophic diatribes, or write on history or public affairs. And Dionysius wishes them to make a good figure in the world: to write and speak in a way which will approve itself to the cultivated but masculine taste of the Roman authorities, and the governing class which modelled itself on Rome.

Therefore, in considering the several excellences of Lysias, or what, as he says, 'is to be got from him', he places first his *καθαρά διάλεκτος*: the purity of his idiom. Atticism is returning, victorious over Asia, and of Attic speech and manner Lysias is the canon, the exemplar and master in one.

II

Like most people who read or write at all seriously, I am somewhat concerned with the poor quality of much of our current criticism, especially that part of it called reviewing. I apply the Dionysian standard and, too often, if I read the review first, it does not tell me what I shall find in the book: if I have read the book, the review rarely helps me to crystallize my own judgment on it. The reason, I believe, is that we have no technique of criticism, no orderly

mode of approach. We do not know where to start. A Civil Servant is taught how to handle an incoming letter: he must master the contents, examine the precedents, consider the statutes or regulations in the case, and, having collected all the relevant information, he has to lay the result in the most intelligible form before his superior officer. But where is the reviewer to begin?

A stranger comes into your room. What you notice first about him is his face and his voice: later you learn his purpose in coming, you gather his interests, you make a provisional judgment on his character. Of a writer, Dionysius would say, you must begin with the diction: and you must start with a canon, from which, as it were, to set off his personal habit of writing. Of course, the ancient critics had in some ways an easier task than we, because they were writing when the epoch of creation was over, and the books were set. Yet in every age there is, even in a language which is still growing and changing, a canon of speech which might be illustrated, if not defined, in this way. A foreign diplomat, looking forward to a long residence in England, does not aspire to be an English stylist, and does not wish to disguise his origin. He merely wants to be right; to speak such English as educated Englishmen speak without thinking about it. Only when he has mastered this idiom is he able to see if a speaker is being, let us say, eloquent, ironic, pungent: or merely inflated, facetious, aggressive; and only then can he afford to venture on pungency, irony, or eloquence himself.

I am not suggesting that all books should be written in the common speech of educated men, a topic on which I have elsewhere said my say. I re-

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gard that speech rather as a datum, above which the writer may raise himself if the theme and his mood require; but below which he is forbidden to fall. And, to my ear, its outstanding characteristics are two: a careful observance of the distinction between the language appropriate to general, and to special, discourse; and a not less careful avoidance of phrasing which will attract attention to itself by any quality except that which Dionysius knows as *καίρως*, appropriateness to the thought and the occasion. Jargon on one side, and deliberate phrase-making on the other, are proofs that the writer has not the courtly and illustrious vernacular at command, that he cannot make his language subserve his thought, and so must let his words take charge.

The other day, for example, I noticed in a critical journal a review which opened:

The drab futility of the machine age is implementing a very understandable reaction towards a more human and colourful ideology.

Clearly the writer had not the vernacular, or he would have known that 'implementing reactions' and 'colourful ideologies' have no place in serious speech. They require the satiric inflexion; they are to be delivered with the tongue in the cheek. Translated into English the sentence might run thus:

One can well understand that people who have to lead a rather mechanical and featureless life will let their fancy stray towards the Middle Ages, where everything seems so highly coloured and personal.

That is not a good sentence. Neither is it a bad sentence. It is just the ordinary unnoticeable English, out of which literary prose has to be made.

III

And here I ask, are our universities doing all they can to foster and inculcate this vernacular? Of the two infections, phrase-making is the less mischievous: words do go to the head, and no one minds young people flinging up their heels a bit when they are first let loose in the fields of literature. Jargon is more offensive and more insidious: whenever I see the word *emotive* in a review, I pass on to the next: it brings with it a whiff of the laboratory, disflavouring the entertainment. But I have sometimes played with the notion of a Guild of Reviewers, serving a turn of apprenticeship to their craft, and only allowed to sign their criticisms when they were out of their time. One would naturally turn to the universities to staff the profession. But could they? I ask, not knowing the answer. If they can, I wish they would. If they can't, must there not be something wrong? And that there is something wrong, I infer from the despairing cries which sometimes reach my ears from editors. 'I know it is badly done but you can hardly find anyone under thirty to do it properly.' Well, if you couldn't find anyone under thirty to draft a dispatch or write a minute, our Public Administration would be in a bad way.

I return to Dionysius and his Rulers. The vernacular of which I am speaking is the language of responsibility, of men who—Dionysius uses almost the exact phrase—'make a conscience of their work'. And with this clue between our fingers the way may be easier to find. The critic who feels his responsibility towards his readers will begin by familiarizing himself, as it were, with the author's

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voice: observing his vocabulary, his imagery, his cadences: noting when, and why, in what directions and with what success, he departs from the standard, the language of educated conversation: whether, for example, to use an excellent distinction of Dionysius, he can raise himself and his subject in pure prose or whether 'he has to lay hold of the poetic apparatus'. And I do not see how any young critic is to achieve this kind of discrimination, without a previous knowledge of what the vernacular is—how it sounds in the mouths of people who use it, not for literary purposes, but in the ordinary course of the day's work.

If a young man asked me how he could best form his style and train his literary judgment, I should say: 'Avoid literary groups: shun criticasteries. Talk as much as you can to educated women older than yourself: and listen, whenever you have a chance, to men whose profession requires them to use common words exactly—officers, civil servants, lawyers—talking about common things.' Two of the aptest remarks on books I have ever heard were dropped casually, *obiter*, in any but literary circles. Of a much recommended history, a lady said: 'It is the sort of thing you can read with the gramophone on.' It was. Across a dinner-table I heard a magistrate remark to his neighbour: 'Extraordinarily unworth reading, but quite good of its kind', and how well one knows that kind of book too. And a doctor, whom I consulted as to the management of my voice before a lecture, used a phrase which Aristotle might have borrowed for the *Rhetoric*. 'It is very important', he said, 'to watch the rate of cerebral percolation in an audience.'

IV

In fact, the fundamental presupposition of classical criticism is that literature is a communal affair: that, in prose at least, great writers are only doing with exemplary skill what we are all necessarily doing all the time, in the way of argument, explanation, narrative, or persuasion. Of course, the skill may be so exquisite as to have a kind of autonomous beauty, a projection of the delight, and (as Longinus finely and profoundly suggests) of the pride, which we all feel at the sight of a faultless performance. This the great classical writers have always recognized as heartily as the romantics: no one more amply than Dionysius himself in his praise of the *χάρης* of Lysias, his grace, his charm. But they would say, I think: In criticism this is the last refinement—to appreciate the *ἐπιτετιγμένον τι* of style. You must not try to short-circuit it: and you can earn the right to say O Altitudo! only by practising yourself among the lower crags. Otherwise, you may point and you may declaim; you may lose yourself in general exclamations; you may feel and perhaps make others feel. But you will never understand and therefore you will never make others see.

In other words, classical criticism is a form of public service and therefore always veering towards rules and regulations and red tape: that is its weakness—while romantic criticism is rather a private indulgence, with its moments doubtless of inspiration and rapture, such as are believed sometimes to follow on indulgence of another sort. The classical critic is didactic: he wishes to raise the common level of appreciation, to make better

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readers as well as better writers. Therefore he must be methodical, working inward from without. It is not his business to expatiate on the result, but to show how it was brought about, because by studying that you may be able to produce something like the same result yourself. You have, he says, the same means at your disposal as the great writers had: words and phrases and the syntax of your native speech. See what they made of them. You take delight in the product? Then take some pains to observe the process.

It is most characteristic of the classical approach that Dionysius, having disposed of the diction of his author, proceeds first, among his remaining excellences, to his lucidity, his self-explanatory clarity of thought and language. Underlying his praise is the same antique conception of literature, and particularly of oratory, as something *ἐν κοινῷ κείμενον*, your business and mine as much as the speaker's, because we are the audience before whom he is pleading. It is we who are to be persuaded, instructed, or convinced, and first of all therefore we must know exactly what he is talking about. But here the greater range of modern literature, and its specialisms, impose caution on a critic. That a book, a paragraph, a sentence, does not yield its whole meaning at once, does not prove that it is obscure, or the writer confused in mind. He may, of course, have an imperfect mastery of his instrument. On the other hand, it is quite possible that his point of view is novel, his ideas still unfamiliar, and the critic, like the rest of the public, has not yet picked up the tune. Of all charges that can be brought against a contemporary, the charge of obscurity or difficulty is the one which I should feel most hesitation in advancing. But on

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the obscurity which comes of affectation, pretentiousness, or negligence, the classical critic will have no mercy: and when he reads, for instance, in Carlyle, that Goethe's *Helena* is

not a type of one thing, but a vague fluctuating fitful adumbration of many,

he will reply with Matthew Arnold—then it must be thoroughly bad.

V

But here I think I could make a distinction which the ancients, when our circumstances had been explained to them, would have approved. I should say: 'You recognized the difference between the esoteric and the exoteric discourse in your philosophic schools; we have to enlarge and subdivide it. We have among us three orders of intelligence which may be called, without offence, the High, the Middle, and the Low Brow. And so great is the number of subjects which we may study, that almost every man of any intelligence and curiosity will be High, Middle, or Low in some of them. Your notion of lucidity therefore has with us to be further refined: and the critic must say to himself, not—Is this clear? (and you, yourself, my dear Dionysius, confessed that you could not follow Thucydides without a commentary) but—Is it clear at the level for which it was written? Because at each of these levels a book may be good, bad, or indifferent.'

'That I follow,' the man from Halicarnassus replied: 'in fact, it rather resembles the distinction we used to make between the agonistic speech, intended to secure a positive result, where the

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reasoning must be close and the facts compactly arrayed; the panegyric, where large assemblies are to be moved; and the epideictic, like those pieces which Lysias wrote for fun and over which Plato chose to be so cattish. But are you not laying a somewhat heavy burden on your critics if you require them to tell you whether a book is good, bad, or indifferent in point of substance and in its own kind? Are they all omniscient? Or do you arrange it so that only historians criticize historians, philosophers philosophers, and so on through the Encyclopaedia? And have you not a division in your libraries, prettily called Belles Lettres? Who criticizes that? I have heard all about your specialist, or esoteric, publications, in which experts claw experts, scholiasts scholiasts, on dates, and readings, and equations. But we are talking of criticism addressed to the public. How is that managed with you?"

I should like to answer somehow thus: 'It is with us a fixed principle that, confronted with a new book, the critic should ask himself, "Do I know enough about the subject to place this book in its right category? And to say whether, within its class, it is good, bad, or middling?" If he cannot answer yes, he must refer it to some better-equipped brother in the craft, who in turn will ask himself for which of the three orders is it written? Having thus adjusted himself, and mastered the personal idiom of the writer, he proceeds in your manner to consider first of all whether he writes well or ill with regard to the matter in hand: and then, whether the work as a whole is lucid, well reasoned, compact, and free from superfluous or inactive matter. These you have taught us to regard as the fundamental excellences,

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and from these he might go on as you would, to consider whether, for example, the writing has a more pictorial or mathematical quality, whether the narrative is fluent or abrupt, the characters clearly blocked out or minutely particularized. And so forth. But all the time he will have in mind an imaginary friend who has strolled into the workshop, picked up a book and asked: Is this a book for me? His duty is to answer that question as fairly as he can, neither obtruding himself, his likes, his dislikes, nor his opinions on other matters; and leaving his friend in no doubt of the meaning of his answer. 'That', I should say, 'is how our young critics are trained. Or ought to be. But as you yourself used to say: "I have given my opinion; if anyone thinks otherwise let him say so".'

THE ORIGIN OF THE WEST-SAXON KINGDOM¹

THERE are periods of history where it is impossible to say that this or that happened, because the evidence is lost; but where, nevertheless, we are bound to say: something like this must have happened, because we can see the result. It is so with the age of which I am speaking in this lecture. On the whole, the reconstruction I propose seems to me to leave fewer elements unaccounted for than any other, but its historic interest, if it has any, is, as it were, outside itself, in the explanation it affords of what came after.

The significance of early Wessex for the history of England lies in this: that Wessex was built on a political conception which has proved to be of inexhaustible vitality and fertility. There is nothing like it in Northumbria: the Kingdoms of the South-East, though they fell easily into the West-Saxon pattern, were too small to create it for themselves: Mercia was never more than a personal union of great and little tribes. The compactness and resilience with which Wessex met and rode out the Danish storm is evidence that the system of unitary kingship and self-acting shire was native to the West-Saxon mind. The incorporation of the South-East, and the shiring of Mercia by the children of Alfred, extended it over the greater part of England; and, to create the English constitution, the Norman had only to disengage

¹ A Lecture, delivered on July 17th, 1934, at Wilton House, Salisbury

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the original conception from its later overgrowths, apply to it his natural gifts for administration and law, and let the counterpoise of King and County work itself, through Sheriff and Exchequer, justices and coroners, into the equipoise of King, Council, and Parliament.

Of any political system which has had so long and splendid a history, the origins are something better than a topic of antiquarian speculation. At some time or other an idea was born, and to discover the controlling circumstances and the directing mind is a problem not altogether, I think, insoluble. The shire is the jurisdiction of an alderman, in particular his military command. The original aldermen of the Saxons were tribal leaders, the king an occasional warlord: the universal Germanic word for army is *here*. In the Laws of Ine the *here* is banned: it is a crime to arm another man's retainers: the alderman who shelters wrongdoers can be removed from his office. Ine is following the course that every mediaeval king of capacity had to take, and take again, until the Tudors reached the goal: converting tribal and feudal lordships into official appointments, without sacrificing the conveniences for war, justice, and taxation which the local lordship provided. The shiring of Wales over the heads of the Lords Marchers by King Henry repeated the shiring of the Midlands by King Edward and the Lady of Mercia, and both had their far-off precedent in the shiring of the Gewissan lands over the heads of athelings and 'over-weening aldermen', princes of Ashdown and princes of Meon. Once indeed the precedent was not applied. How might things have gone if Elizabeth had followed the advice of Henry Sidney, and 'seneschals and justices in each shire' had brought to Ireland the

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peace and order which in thirty years had made the Welsh 'the best people to govern and the best subjects to their Sovereign in Europe'?

Snorri's observation, worthy of Bacon or Machiavelli, that Harold of Norway made it more profitable to be an earl than a king, marks such a turn as I suppose Ini to have effected, when, coming after the long anarchy of which Bede speaks, he declared the aldermen removable, and made private war a crime. *Nascono occasioni, e svaniscono per mancamento d'uomini.* Four such men as Ceadualla (the glimpse we have of him in Eddi's Life of Wilfrid is enough to show his quality), Heddi of Winchester, Aldhelm the jurist, and Ini the lawgiver, with Wilfrid behind them, *regni excelsus consiliarius*, were enough to make a kingdom and they made it.

A political order was established: the military power gave way to the civil: the marches were turned into counties:

Et minax, quod sic voluere, ponto
Unda recumbit.¹

* * * *

For the early years of our history, by far the most important document the student has to handle is the map, and the face of the country which it portrays. What we see about us is still the landscape of the Golden Age of agriculture, eighty years ago; small fields, hedgerows, hanging woods, and parks; laid down, as it were, on the Domesday landscape of meadow, open field and pasture, and a bit of wood for the pigs. But that landscape was already then very ancient: in the Saxon Landbooks we can see it coming into exis-

¹ Burke, *Speech on Conciliation with America*: he is referring to Tudor Wales

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tence, as fields are won from woodland or scrub or marsh (and sometimes staked to prevent them from slipping back again), the lynchets are carved along the slopes, and the downs are scarred with the White Holes from which the colder lands at the foot were marled; and anything which can save it from unconsidered, or unnatural, deformation, may preserve for the historian some clue which he needs to make his written records intelligible. Archaeology can do much, but archaeology has so far thrown little light on the really Dark Ages of our history, the two centuries which saw the transformation of Roman Britain into Saxon England: on the chief transaction of those ages, the formation of Wessex, it has thrown no light at all. The clue, so we are told, has not been found. I hope to show that the clue is not difficult to find, if you look for it in the right place, and that the right place is not far from where we are meeting.

Let me begin by clearing away an ancient misconception as to the status of Winchester. After the Danish wars of Alfred, the primacy of Winchester is admitted. It enjoyed the prestige of the mother church of the kingdom. It was central. It had the best hotels; that is, the largest monasteries. In accounting for the rise and decline of mediaeval towns, we must always bear this advantage or handicap in mind. Winchester only gave way to Westminster after Edward the Confessor had built the great Abbey. Indeed, if he had planted the monks at Barking and sent the nuns to Thorney, it is quite likely that East End and West End would have changed places. Stratford-atte-Bowe would be to us, as to Chaucer, the last word in feminine elegance; and foreign tailors would strive in vain to capture the

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true Whitechapel fit. Of this ancient connexion between governments and monasteries you may see the symbol still surviving, if, when next you pass through Dean's Yard, Westminster, you look towards the iron gates opening into the cloisters. You will observe, not, as you might expect, a verger, but a policeman on duty. That policeman is posted there to assert the right of Parliament to meet in the Abbey precincts.¹

The King's Counsellors assemble in the Monastery. But the King's servants administer his laws from the Palace. If now you go behind the Danish wars, you find that the relations between Westminster and Whitehall were anticipated by the relations between Winchester and Wilton. The great Council of 854 when King Ethelwulf tithed his lands was attended, we read, by three kings, two archbishops, all the earls and bishops, and an infinite multitude of the faithful. The nuns of Wilton might have been delighted, but would certainly have been embarrassed, to find accommodation for such an assembly. It met at Winchester. Even so, St. Swithun seems to have represented that if there was to be much more of this sort of thing, the see of Winchester would expect some assistance from the Treasury. But the charters which give effect to its decisions are dated

on the second day of Easter at our palace which
is called Wilton.

The clerk is, no doubt, thinking in English and translating into Latin as he goes. What is the English for *palatium quod dicitur Wiltun*?

¹ I owe this little-known piece of constitutional lore to the late Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Clerk of the House of Commons. But, since I wrote, I fear the policeman has been economized

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Henry of Huntingdon, quoting from an ancient list of the Saxon kingdoms, writes: 'The third was Wessex, *cujus caput Wiltonia.*' When we speak of the capital in those early days of kings who collected much of their revenue by going round the country eating it on the spot, we mean the place where the King has a house of special dignity, a Kingsbury, and where the Archives of the Kingdom are kept. Go back to 838, the year of the concordat between Wessex and the Archbishop of Canterbury, acting also for the ancient kingdom of Kent. The two parties met at Kingston in Surrey. The proceedings closed with mutual assurances of fidelity and protection, and the stipulation that two copies of the Act were to be kept, one by the Archbishop and one by the Kings of Wessex,

cum hereditatis eorum scripturis:
among the Books of their Patrimony.

Then the scene changes, and the next stage is the solemn reception and confirmation of the Act in the royal town of Wilton. As the Mayoress of Wilton is present, I would beg her to see that any excavations for gas or water which may be necessary in the centre of the borough should be carefully observed, because somewhere below the soil of Kingsbury must lie the remains of the palace where, by declaring the Union of Wessex and Kent, Egbert and his son laid the foundations of the Kingdom of England.

Caput ecclesiae and *caput regni*, Winchester and Wilton acknowledge no rivalry. But Winchester is never, in the early centuries, styled *villa regia*: it is the Bishop's town not the King's. They are twin capitals, religious and secular, an arrangement which seems to point to a very early union of two tribes,

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one contributing a royal house and seat, the other centring on its principal church:

Sacra deosque dabo: socer arma Latinus habeto.

It suggests, almost, that the concordat of Wessex and Kent had been preceded by an earlier concordat of Wilton and Winchester, and that this forgotten transaction was the foundation of the West-Saxon Kingdom. In my opinion, this conclusion, or something very like it, would be right, but to bring out the evidence we must try another line of approach.

The heathen in his blindness has been heard to call our landscape tame. That is partly because he is a heathen, but mainly because he is blind. I do not know, anywhere in England, a landscape which, regarded historically, is more dramatic than the view across the Donheads where Shaftesbury and War-dour keep watch on one another. As you go past Ebbesborne Wake and Alvediston, the gate of the West seems always to be opening before you. Only when you reach Berwick St. John do you realize that the gate is barred by the haughty ridge of Shaftesbury. Go up to Clearbury and look west: always that same uncompromising blue barrier. But if you look east, you remember how the Plain of Salisbury rolls and dips and rises into the Plain of Andover and Winchester, and you reach no natural frontier till you come in sight of the Wealden forest. South of this chalk upland stretches a different kind of country altogether, the eocene sands and clays. If we had nothing else to guide us, we might almost guess, simply from a geological map, that, historically, eocene Hampshire would form one unit of settlement, chalk Hampshire and chalk Wiltshire another. By a rare piece of good fortune, we find our guess

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confirmed by the written evidence. Writing to Bede in Jarrow, Bishop Daniel of Winchester explains that apart from the South Saxons, of whom he has taken temporary charge, he has under his care the Jutes in the south of Hampshire, who 'belong to the region of the Gewissas'. That the Gewissas are the predominant partner appears from the fact that 'Bishop of the Gewissas' is the style often borne by the Bishop of Winchester. Who, then, are the Gewissas? The answer is, first, that they are the Royal Tribe, the King's own people, because the name Gewis occurs in the royal pedigree some steps above Cerdic, the reputed founder of the Kingdom. Whether Gewis is to be taken as a real ancestor like Othman the Ottoman, or a legendary ancestor like Dorus the Dorian, I do not know and it does not matter. But presumably if the King lived at Wilton his people lived round him. And when we examine our earliest surviving documents we find evidence that the people round Wilton are in many ways a race apart, distinguishable not only from the Jutes of Hampshire (that we might expect), but from the Saxons of the Thames Valley, and even of North Wiltshire.

Consider first this fact. When Birinus, the Apostle of the West, first came among us he found us *gens paganissima*, a most heathen people. His chief scene of activity was the Thames Valley, because his first church was at Dorchester, near Oxford. If now you take the place-names and charters of North Wiltshire, you will agree that the Northerners must have been a very heathen people. The old gods are everywhere: there was a temple at Froxfield on the Bath Road; there is a whole cluster of Woden names round Alton, dyke, barrow, gate, and dene; Thunor

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is at Hardenhuish; Tiw and Heremod at Purton; the Nicors, monsters of the pool, found a home in Savernake; Grendel, the monster of the marshes, named a mere in Ham. In the Southern valleys, with the one exception of a tree in the Chalke Valley named after the legendary Scyld, you will find no corresponding trace of heathen ways or worship. Nor, though this may be an accident, are there any Christian references either, nothing for example to match the crucifixes which stood on the borders of Froxfield, Christian Malford and Wanborough. Perhaps you may recall Aubrey's profound observation, made in the course of many journeys between Easton Piers and the beloved farm of Broad Chalke:

In North Wiltshire the Aborigines speak drawling.¹ They only milk the cows and make cheese. These circumstances make them melancholy, contemplative, and malicious. On the Downs, *scilicet* the Southpart, their flesh is hard, their bodies strong: being wearied after hard labour, they have no leisure to read or contemplate of religion, but go to bed.

Nor is this the only peculiarity of the Southerners. All over England, the standard word for a boundary is *mere* or *landmere*. In the Jutish South-East they favour *mark*: in the South-West, in Devon, Dorset, and Somerset, *landshare*. But these are later conquests, so that the origin of the landshare usage must be looked for farther east. In the whole of the rest of England I can only find it, in Saxon documents, three times. In South Wiltshire it occurs eleven times. The point, for example, by the Race-course where Britford touches Netherhampton, is registered as the

¹ On the same authority, they had livid skins, feggy persons, and gallipot eyes

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Landshare of the Britfordings. The western boundary of Wilton itself is described as the Landshare of the Ugfordings.

In both these respects the Northerners are, so to speak, normal Saxons: the Southerners are Saxons with a difference. The same is true, I think, of their material remains. Archaeology is a science which I approach with diffidence anywhere, and in Wiltshire with trepidation. Archaeologists are such savage creatures. Addressing myself impartially to those who know nothing and those who know everything, I will only say this. The badge of the Northerners, of the Thames Valley Saxons, is the saucer brooch, a disappointing object which looks rather like a cheap metal ash-tray which has been trodden on. You meet them at Mildenhall and Bassett Down; and just over our borders, at Coleshill and Kemble. In the South you find them at Harnham only, although in the South there are many more interments recorded, singly or in grave-fields, than in the North. The Jutes preferred a more splendid type of jewellery, with inlaid garnets. You find it in the barrow on the Race Plain, where, some chief having fallen, we may suppose, far away in battle, his men raised a cenotaph and laid in it his war-gear and jewels. But obviously you cannot separate the Race Plain at the top of the hill from Harnham at the bottom, and at Harnham you find, along with the saucer brooches, jewellery with the same Southward-pointing affinities: button brooches, for example, which recall Alfriston in Sussex and Marchélepot on the Somme; a trowel-shaped brooch of which a duplicate was found in the Isle of Wight and a near relation at Bifrons in Kent; and a signet ring with monogram which can be matched from the great Frankish ceme-

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tery at Herpes (Charente). Go to Winkelbury: the silvered girdle hangers can be paired from Kent, France, and Switzerland. Go to Shrewton, you find the same girdle hangers there.

You might ask me whether there is anything in the dialect or customs of the Gewissas corresponding to the Jutish colour of their ornament. It is asking rather much, if you consider what a handful of scraps our documents amount to. None the less, the correspondence does appear. In the considerable body of West-Saxon law, the *esne* (we may translate it *retainer*) occurs only twice: he existed, but he was a rarity. In Kent he was an important element in society. I find him twice in the Chalke Valley: there was an Esnedyke on Winkelbury Hill and an Isnehull in Throop. I have spoken of the Jutish preference for *mark*.

Along Reculver mark to St. Mildred's mark and south along the mark to the river.

That is how they recited their bounds in Kent, and, with one solitary exception in Berkshire, you will never, I think, find that phrasing in a purely Saxon territory. But that is how they recited them at Odstock:

Along the stream to the mark: along the mark to the barrow: from the barrow along the mark to the post, and then along the mark to the lynch.

And I need not remind you that Odstock is equidistant from the Isnehull of Throop and the Jutish ornaments of Harnham.

Finally, consider this. If from place-names and charters you make a list of the personal names of the Gewissan country and then plot them on the

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map, you will find similar or related names answering one another, as it were, from valley to valley, in a way that suggests a family party. Fobba I had a well near Downton: Fobba II had a spring, a *funta*, at Fovant. Babba I was at Bapton, Babba II at Baverstock. Fugol was at Fuggleston: Fygela at Figheldean, next door to Fitela of Fittleton. Gyfa was at Coombe Bissett: Gifica at Tisbury. Bron had a ford over the Chalke stream: Bron's barrow could be seen at Idmiston. Cort we find near Broad Chalke: his family the Cortingas are at Corton. Dynn was at Stratford Tony: the Dynningas in the next valley at Dinton. Clara, perhaps, was on one side of the Avon at Clearbury, the Claringas on the other at Clarendon. One Bila we know, because he lived in Bilbury Rings. There was another on the Nadder and a third near Old Sarum.

Two of these groups are particularly interesting. Half the Bymeras had a combe away over by Toyd. The other half settled in Bemerton. The name means Trumpeter. You may think of them, if you like, as the King's Musick, and it looks as if they were kept blowing away on the other side of the Blandford Road to practise, and were only allowed out when they knew their piece. The other is the Brydingas. One Bryda was close by at Burcombe: the other fixed his boundary on Winkelbury Hill, at Bridmore. Across the valley, on Whitesheet Hill, is an earthwork which the Gewissas called the Dyke of the Brydingas. We have reached the outposts once more. Perhaps Bryda was once the Warden of our Marches, looking out from Winkelbury over the forest belt towards the still unconquered West.

I do not wish to put more weight on the evidence than it will carry, but personally I find it irresistible.

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From whatever point we approach the problem, we get consistent answers, and answers too which agree exactly with the traditions preserved in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The chronicler is not composing a history: he is only setting down in a very rough—perhaps a quite mistaken—chronological framework, headlines or mottoes, as it were, of famous stories handed down from father to son. When, for instance, he writes:

They landed at Portsmouth and slew a young British man, a very noble man,

I can hardly doubt that he, or his first predecessor, had in mind some heroic song which had preserved the memory of a gallant defence upon the coast, just as if we were constructing a chronicle of the Napoleonic Wars we might jot down

1798 Battle of the Nile. Casabianca.

1809 Moore killed at Corunna and buried darkly at dead of night.

But among these stories of raids and landings which never seem to get anywhere, one is indicated with resounding emphasis.

This year Cerdic and Cynric fought the Britons at Charford and from that day the Royal House of Wessex has reigned.

Why of all the villages in Wessex should Charford be chosen as the birthplace of the kingdom? Because the Gewissas were seeking a country in which they could live, and they dated the kingdom from the day they entered it. You may understand—if you have some imagination you may recapture—the glory of that day by going to Southampton and returning along the Landford road. Then

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strike off and follow the track through the Hamptworth Woods to Redlynch. All the way you are among heath and forest, marshes and sour pools. Redlynch, you will remember, is the last of the forest villages, the houses being scattered here and there in the ancient glades. But as you climb the last ridge on the Downton road, all at once the heath and forest are behind you, and in front of you, stretching up the Avon Valley from Charford, is the eternal Saxon landscape, meadow, plough, and pasture, in its richest and most inviting form. That was the kingdom they had found, and what they thought of it they have told us by the mouth of the eternal Saxon yeoman, William Cobbett.

I love the downs so much that if I had to choose I would live here, and especially I would farm here, rather than on the banks of the Wye in Herefordshire, in the Vale of Gloucester, or Worcester, or of Evesham, or even in what the Kentish men call their Garden of Eden. I have now seen (for I have, years back, seen the Vales of Taunton, Glastonbury, Honiton, Dorchester and Sherborne) what are deemed the richest and most beautiful parts of England; and, if called upon to name the spot, which I deem the brightest and most beautiful, and of its extent, the best of all, I should say: the villages of Norton Bavant and Bishopstrow between Heytesbury and Warminster, in Wiltshire; for *there* is, as appertaining to rural objects, *everything* I delight in. Smooth and verdant downs, in hills and valleys of every variety as to height and depth and shape; rich cornland, unencumbered by fences; meadows in due proportion and those watered at pleasure: and lastly, the homesteads and villages, sheltered in winter and shaded in summer by lofty and beautiful trees; to which may be added, roads never dirty and a stream never dry. . . . So that, all taken together, it seems impossible to find a more beautiful and pleasant country than this, or to imagine any life more easy and happy than men might here lead.

Happily, we all have our preferences or we should

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crowd each other. If there is anything more beautiful than the track down Stratford Tony Combe, when the gorse and the hawthorn are in bloom together, the sudden sight of the Chalkebourne under its arch of trees, the apple blossom in the gardens, and the great elm below the church, it must be, as Plato says, 'in heaven and not here'.

Now, at last, I hope, the threads are beginning to come together into a pattern. What we set out to account for if we could was: the twin capitals, the union of Jutes and Gewissas, the sharp differences between North and South, the Kentish or Frankish affinities of the Southerners, and the secular primacy of Wilton. All these things are explicable on one assumption only, that the homelands of the West-Saxon Kingdom are the valleys radiating from Britford, for which Wilton is the natural centre, and that they were occupied by a closely related group of kindreds coming from the sea. Once established, they spread by natural diffusion over the chalk country with which they had become familiar, dominating or absorbing the Jutish settlements round Winchester, and the British survivors of those Western uplands, which in due course became the two Font-hills and the five Deverills.

This reading of the story explains, too, why the Chronicler, having planted his West-Saxons in Wiltshire, goes wandering off to the Thames Valley. He is reporting a different set of traditions, relating to the expansion of the inland Saxons, the Saucerb-rooch pagans, under their famous war-lord Ceawlin. But when two tribes are expanding, collision is inevitable. At some date about the end of the sixth century, the clash came. Marching south along Ridgeway, the Saxon was brought to battle, on the

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downs above Alton Priors, by the Gewissas fighting for their own land, and, embedded in the curt prose of the *Chronicle*, we have, I believe, a strain of their triumph song. 'Never,' it ran, 'since the English came to Britain, was there a slaughter like the slaughter round the Great Barrow, when Ceawlin was driven out.' The Barrow still stands, looking out over the Vale of Pewsey, and near it you may see to this day a boundary stone which was recorded, eleven hundred years and more ago, as the Stone with the Hole on Top, *in hereditatis scripturis*, in the Books of the Patrimony of the Gewissan Kings. Between Charford and Alton is the Kingdom of the Gewissas.

The victory at Alton established the house of Cerdic as the acknowledged heads of the Saxon confederacy. For a generation we can trace them, very faintly, guarding their new-won lands against South-Saxons and East-Saxons. Then they begin to relax their hold, in face of a counter-federation, the Mercians or South Angles. First the Upper Thames Valley goes, then the Middle Thames, and the new bishopric is withdrawn from Dorchester to Winchester. The kingdom is concentrating behind its natural frontier, the escarpment of the downs, and wheeling from north to west. Historic Wessex is coming into shape. The King is at Wilton: his own people are now the Wilsaete. As they expand, new groups take similar names, the Dorsaete drawing their landshares round Dorchester, the Fromsaete beyond Bradford. Then the frontier goes forward again and the Fromsaete are absorbed in the Sumorsaete. Eastward, the mixed territory is governed from Hampton, Winchester being the bishop's city, and therefore is called Hampshire. In the far west, Devon is opening to colonization. We

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recognize the five shires of Wessex. But at Rome, where they naturally watch with interest the new territory won for Christendom, the land of St. Aldhelm and St. Boniface, they speak of them, and for some generations will continue to speak of them, as the Five Tribes of the Gewissas. In England the name was lost in the more illustrious style of West-Saxon, or survived only as an antiquarian flourish to adorn a charter. But it remained in the memory of the Celt as far away as Ulster, and in the Welsh annals it is written: 'This year died Alfred, King of the Gewissas.'

Nearly a hundred years after the Conquest, John of Salisbury, in the *Polycraticus*, having spoken of the privilege of Kent to form the first line in battle, goes on: 'And by the same law, the province which in modern usage is called Wiltshire, claims the right to form *cohors subsidiaria*, the division in support.' The Normans had, beyond any race recorded in history, a capacity for local attachment, which made them by turns the best Frenchmen in France and the worst Irishmen in Ireland. They had quite forgotten that they had ever been Norwegians, they were rapidly forgetting that they had ever been foreigners at all, and thought of themselves only as the countrymen of Arthur and Alfred, of Edmund the Martyr and Ine the lawgiver. These were the years when Geoffrey of Monmouth was letting the flood of Arthurian romance loose upon Europe, when Mary of France was turning into dainty French verse the stories she had heard from English minstrels, or perhaps from her own nuns at Shaftesbury, and her nephew William Longsword was employing clerks learned in both tongues to translate for him the wise sayings of King Alfred. The conquerors were

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garnering every fragment they could recover of the traditions of the land they had come to regard as their own, and John's boast sounds like such a tradition, which he had heard, perhaps, when he was a boy at Sarum: an echo of an echo from the time, long before England existed or even Wessex existed, when the future of both lay hidden in the valleys of the Avon and the Nadder and the Wylfe, when the Gewissas were the king's guards because the Gewissas were the king's people, and a man standing, let us imagine, on Knighton Down, might have looked over their kingdom in its full extent, south to the sea which had brought them, and northwards to the faint blue line of their downland rampart.

EYES AND NO EYES

AMONG the changes of the last thirty years the one which strikes me most forcibly, and certainly not most agreeably, is the revolution in transport which has destroyed the mutual seclusion of our villages and smaller towns and is now fast destroying their individuality. I remember that when I was an undergraduate, something in my reading having stirred my fancy, I decided to go over for a day from Oxford and have a look at the country where, in fact, I now live. But having worked out the cross-country trains, and calculated the chances of finding an old horse-bus at the right place, I had to give it up. Not altogether unwillingly, because there remained the pleasant taste of adventure reserved for another time; and as the distance could now, without any gross or obvious violation of the laws designed for our protection, be covered in little more than an hour, it will be seen that adventure was very easily to be had.

Now multiply all that by a hundred: for the road, say, from Oxford to Abingdon or Wantage, put the road from Calais to the Splügen; instead of Malmesbury or Savernake take Genoa or Venice for your objective; and, having fixed these ratios in your mind, read the opening sentence of the Journey from Mestre in *The Stones of Venice*. The 'days of leisurely travel' from one major point to another came to an end, of course, with the railways. But the experience, the sensation, of leisurely travel on a smaller scale

was still to be had by anyone who chose, and to be had moreover, not as a calculated indulgence of sentiment, but in the ordinary course of affairs, as soon as he left the station and trusted himself to bicycle, horse, or feet. Add to this, that though 'the base and brickish skirts' were spreading, they had not so much extended the lines or blurred the silhouette of towns as to impair their identity: and still, with some assistance from the fancy, and a rather careful selection of one's approach, one could recover the delight with which, in the olden days, 'from the top of the last hill he had surmounted, the traveller beheld the quiet village where he was to rest, scattered among the meadows beside its valley stream, or, from the long hoped for turn in the dusty causeway, saw for the first time the towers of some famed city, faint in the rays of sunset'.

The reticulation of the English country, with large knots for the market towns and little knots for the villages, was the product of physical causes, among which the pace of an ox and of a horse were not the least important: just as ribbon development and dormitory villages are the product of petrol. And when we look at the knots in detail, analysing them into their component buildings, again we see that Nature has had her say, commanding them to be built of stone or brick or timber or daub, and roofed with whatever material lies to hand. But is this all? Is there not perhaps a metaphysic as well as a physic of domestic architecture, and a certain coherence between the people and their dwelling-places, so that houses are like this or that not only because Nature has ordered that they should be, but because their inhabitants are that way too? And why are the inhabitants so and not otherwise? Must we go back

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to Nature to find out? Or to history? Or to what?

With these reflections and these queries in his mind, Mr. Ruskin, gentleman commoner of Christ Church and just turned eighteen, took up his pen to write on the 'Poetry of Architecture', in the early months of 1837, and he closed his first paragraph with the sounding apophthegm

No man can be an architect who is not a metaphysician. It is this peculiarity of the art which constitutes its nationality; and it will be found as interesting as it is useful, to trace in the distinctive character of this architecture of nations not only its adaptation to the situation and climate in which it has arisen, but its strong similarity to, and connexion with, the prevailing turn of mind by which the nation who first employed it is distinguished.

Nothing could be better, whether our object be the study and preservation of old buildings or the construction of new. In Wiltshire, for example, there are five clearly defined types of construction, determined by the relative accessibility of various materials; and the elegance or solidity with which each type is worked out locally is in pretty close proportion to the value, that is the fertility, of the land. Anyone who had mastered the rules could, from the comparative prevalence of flint, brick, and stone, guess to within a few miles in what part of the county he had been dumped blindfold: and, if he has to build, it will be in a concatenation accordingly, for 'unity of feeling', says the young sage with another dogmatic flourish of his pen, 'is the first principle of good taste'.

But as soon as we pass from these admirable doctrines to specific observation we become aware that something has gone wrong. First follows a charming

description of the lowland cottage of England: it is, of course, thatched and whitewashed, and 'its rough surface catches a side light as brightly as a front one', (that is well observed); the window has diamond panes, and 'a light wooden porch breaks the flat of the cottage face'. Later, Ruskin spreads himself, in an analysis of all possible landscapes into Simple Blue, Picturesque Blue, Green, Brown, and Gray, and concludes, I am sorry to say, that in Simple Blue Country, though the houses may be of red brick, 'no stone quoining or presence of any contrasting colour should be admitted'. Had Ruskin never seen Abingdon?

But there is more in it than a freakish dislike of red and white. How did it come about that a young man, so naturally gifted and so well equipped by travel, could pass some years at Oxford when Oxford was at the peak of her beauty, without apparently noticing that the buildings were rather pretty (he has a word of approval for one of the windows at Brasenose), that there were some nice meadows close at hand, some good views of Simple Blue Country from Elsfeld or Boar's Hill (he has instead to quote the view from Richmond Terrace), and a really excellent river? One recalls the magical exactness of some phrase in which he records his observation of a French or Italian landscape, and one asks, if he could see

the flaky veils of the mist of the brooks, spreading low along the pasture lands

between Abbeville and Rouen, why could he not see them between Eynsham and Iffley? I shall not go to Torcello again, but when I saw it, some years before the war, it was, down to

the door of its ruinous staircase, swinging idly on its hinges,

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the Torcello that Ruskin knew; and a few pages would have preserved for us, not less completely and exactly, the Oxford that he knew. They were not written. 'Is there to be no more of Oxford?' Froude asked plaintively, when *Praeterita* was coming out in parts. There was no more.

The truth, and the trouble, was that Ruskin was a Grand Tourist, and below the level of the Grand Tour or the Journey in Pursuit of the Picturesque, in Dovedale or the Lakes, he could not see at all. With the baleful consequences of that insensibility we are struggling to-day. Suppose it had been otherwise. Imagine Ruskin, not a gentleman commoner accustomed to travel at large and in all the luxury of family coach and courier, but a servitor with nothing but his feet to carry him. Endow him with the same natural gifts, the most observant eye on record and an unrivalled mastery of descriptive prose, and then set him to work, studying, let us say, Holywell and Merton Street with the minute and loving care which he did give to any insanitary back lane in Zug or Verona; or ranging farther afield, not from Milan to Genoa or 'the King of Sardinia's capital' (where he remarks that some of the minor streets are in brick, and really quite commendable), but from Wood to Water Eaton, or from Brill to Burford: his farthest horizon being not

the mighty fragments of peaked light, standing up behind the barred clouds of evening, one after another, countless, the crown of the Adrian sea,

but the Chilterns or the Berkshire Downs; noticing, as he went, how building does cohere with 'situation and climate and turn of mind' and not merely telling us that it does; and discovering that not all lowland

cottages are thatched and whitewashed, that not all English landscape is trim, and that the Simple Blue of Otmoor is no more like the Simple Blue of the White Horse than either is like a Blue Cheese or a Blue Moon.

There would have been no *Stones of Venice*, no *Modern Painters*, and no *Lamps*. Instead, there might have been such an analysis, and such pictures, of the human landscape of England as would have furnished the coming generations with a complete philosophy of planning and design. Excited, dazzled, and overwhelmed by the rapture of travel, Ruskin excited, dazzled, and overwhelmed his age by the splendour of his language: he imposed his standards of appreciation with the united authority of an artist, a critic, and a moralist: and to the business in hand, whether it was building churches or housing the people, those standards were for the most part irrelevant, precisely because his just insistence on 'climate, situation, and turn of mind' had, in England, no backing of historical knowledge or direct observation. It was a conception without perception, and therefore empty. We were left, at the most critical period of our artistic history, without any body of native aesthetic thought to resist the invasion of deceased styles and alien manners, and to preserve the 'unity of feeling which is the first principle of good taste'. In 1936, with the connivance of the Crown, three savages destroyed the Court House at Eltham, in its place and kind one of the loveliest things surviving in England. It had, they said, no historical or architectural interest: it did not belong to any of the styles or periods which are scheduled for admiration. But if it had not been for Ruskin and the Gothic revival, they might have noticed that it was beautiful.

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Edward the Sheriff holds WILCOT. There is land for 10 ploughs. There are in demesne three ploughs and six serfs. There are 37 villagers. There are 40 acres of meadow, 20 of pasture, 50 of copse: a new church, an excellent house and a good vineyard.

FROM the edge of the plough-land, as you look over the meadow, the copse, now a sanctuary for birds, is on the right, the cotes of the village on the left. The house and church are in their tuft of trees, and the thatched wall, which runs across the middle of the picture, almost certainly follows the line of the wall which enclosed the *domus optima*, and the barns and yard where Edward stored his crops, stabled his twenty-four oxen, and housed his serfs. The church, indeed, like the house, has been rebuilt more than once. But tradition still points out the levelled slopes where the vines once grew, and in the dining-room of the manor you may still see a fragment of Edward's excellent house. No doubt it has rivals in other places, though it cannot have many, because Domesday rarely mentions a house at all. But, in its own county, it is the oldest country house on record.

Standing as it does at the head of Edward's possessions, it was, we must think, his chief and favourite residence. A pleasant change it must have been from the dusty and crowded lanes of the garrison city where he did his work, and from which he took his

¹ First published in *The Legacy of England* (Batsford, 1935)

surname, Edward of Salisbury. He had chosen well, or rather some far-off predecessor had chosen for him, because Wilcot is the typical Saxon settlement, with everything that a hungry sea-worn settler could desire. A spring-head of clear water, which still runs past the Ford by the Wilcotes; water gathered in the great reservoir of the chalk downs and issuing over the rich greensand at their feet: juicy meadows, easy gradients for the plough, the best of turf for the sheep; a bit of wood for the pigs, for fencing and fuel. He wanted no more. But that he meant to have, and the English landscape is, in its distinctive features, the creation of his will. Later generations will enclose and improve; will drain and hedge; will turn wastes into parks. But ultimately the Domesday landscape, *terra, pratum, pastura, silva*, will be found underlying it all. When the Norman came it had been five or six hundred years in making; it reached its high point of pride and beauty in the middle of the nineteenth century; and its mid-point everywhere is the country house.

Edward's villagers probably spoke of The House, in distinction to the cotes in which they lived themselves. But all over England there is another word with which the Domesday commissioners must have become very familiar. 'The land belonged to four brothers, but there was only one Hall.' 'The Hall owns three horses.' 'Roger's land belongs to St. Edmund's Hall.' Generally, a hall is any house of outstanding size or dignity. In particular, it is the place where the collector calls for the King's taxes: the centre of the village economy; estate-office and court-house, and receiving-station for the local produce; where the corn is delivered and the reapers keep their harvest-home. To Shakespeare, a Midlander,

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Hall is the natural name for the great house of the neighbourhood:

Kate of Kate-hall, my super-dainty Kate.

So it was to Crabbe, a Suffolk man, who wrote the *Tales of the Hall*; and to Tennyson, a Lincolnshire man, where

Aylmer followed Aylmer at the Hall
And Averill Averill at the Rectory.

In a list of Gentlemen's Seats of 1830 I find Hall and House in the proportion of seventy to sixty. Park comes third with twenty-five, and then Place. The significance of Place is something of a mystery. Park reflects the age of improvement, and the end of the days

When Darnel Park was Darnel waste,
And roads were all unknown as scurvy,

just as Abbey and Priory preserve the memory of the Dissolution. Anyone who finds himself, like Mr. Darcy of Pemberley, 'in his own house on a Sunday evening with nothing to do', and a gazeteer at hand, might perform a very useful piece of research by plotting the distribution of these names, and their relative frequency in different counties.

But how has hall come to mean a passage-way from the front door, a depository for overcoats and umbrellas? The answer to this question contains in brief the evolution of the English house, both great and small. 'The architecture of an old English gentleman's house was a good high strong wall, a gatehouse and a great Hall and Parlour; and, within the little green court where you came in, stood, on one side, the Barn. They then thought not the noise of the thresh-old ill-music.' So Aubrey wrote in the seventeenth

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century, and his sketch of Bradfield Manor is both correct and typical. In the North, where

Tarras and Ewes make nightly stir,
And Eskdale forays Cumberland,

houses will long be built with good strong walls. In the South, where the King's peace is better kept, the wall need not be so high. Indeed, if you make it too strong, particularly if you provide it with battlements, the sheriff will probably call and invite you to produce your licence or to take it down. But, open or fortified, all houses conform to Aubrey's type of hall and bower, the hall for all purposes (unless you are so refined as to do your cooking behind a screen at the end) and the bower for the master and mistress to sleep in, and keep their few family treasures. As the world grows safer, and the farmer richer, the bower develops at the expense of the hall, while the general adoption of the chimney makes it possible to ceil the hall and have a second set of chambers above. The hall, in fact, becomes, first, the central apartment of the Hall; then the entrance-room; finally the passage. Thus we end by using the same word for a vast complex of bowers and chambers, each intended for some specific purpose—eating, sleeping, reading, smoking, music, and billiards—and for a slip so narrow that a perambulator cannot get through without scratching the wall-paper.

But we are thinking now of the hall as country house, the home of the country gentleman, and if we look forward some four hundred years from Domesday we shall see that the country gentlemen have become the chief figures in a landscape out of which the once-powerful sheriff is beginning to fade. They are regularly invited to send representatives to

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Westminster to advise the King. The Boroughs are invited too, but unless a Borough is very independent—or very dependent—it will, as likely as not, ask some neighbouring gentleman to act on its behalf. The King's judges come down from Westminster to do the greater justice, but the lesser justice the gentleman of the county will do themselves, in petty sessions and quarter sessions. It is, in fact, their position as justices that gives them their standing in the shire, and Aubrey, we find, will speak indifferently of a Gentleman's house, or a Justice's house. They have taken over the local administration; they will keep it till the Local Government Act of 1888; and they will not altogether lose it then.

What, in the meantime, has become of that manorial organization of lord; villein, cottar, and bordar; free man and socman; which is depicted for us in Domesday Book? The form persists, and in the more primitive and dangerous North much of the reality. Everywhere manor courts are held to admit new tenants, to present defective hedges, tumbling walls, and blocked-up drains, and to fine the villager who neglects to put them right. But in the South the villeins are as free as their lord, and service on the lord's land has long been commuted for money rents. The lord is now rather the landlord; by the middle of the fifteenth century the lawyers can speak of *le lessour*, *appele landlord*; he is the rent-receiver; and he may spend a year's rent, if he likes, on one splendid appearance in the tiltyard. In King Harry's days it will be a good investment for a young man of wit and muscle. What is more serious, he may pull down his cotes, turn a dozen holdings into one sheepwalk, grow wool for the Flemish market or make scarlet cloth for Venice, and

put a hundred families on the road. Agriculture is becoming industrialized, and with the village economy, save as patron and magistrate, the country gentleman has less and less to do. In other words, the notion of farming for profit is making headway against the primitive practice of farming for subsistence, and where there is a growing urban or industrial area within reach—London, for example, or the cloth towns of the West—the profit is rapid and substantial. The distinction between the Landed Interest and the Moneyed Interest is beginning to shape itself. But, as the actual cultivation of the soil is not yet scientific or progressive, the profit is not put back into the land. Some of it may go into merchant ventures, setting forth from London or Bristol. But more is spent in the building and decoration of houses, on clothes and horses, tapestry and furniture.

Typical of the age of transition in the fifteenth century, and a forecast of the age to come, is the figure of Thomas Tropenell and his manor of Great Chalfield. He was, we are told, and from the mask-like countenance and tight lips of his portrait we can believe it, a 'perilous, covetous man', and his chief occupation seems to have been the acquisition of estates with a doubtful title, which he then gripped fast. In his sixtieth year he began to enter up his title-deeds in a Ledger Book, which he continued till within a few months of his death at eighty-three, and which, after many wanderings, now lies once more in the great hall of the house which Thomas built. It is a defensible house, built against trouble from casual raiders or unsuccessful litigants, in 'a loop of the stream which turned its mill. The gateway and the walls were strong, but it was meant to

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be a comfortable house as well; with the noise and smells of the kitchen kept away; with parlours at both ends of the hall, and gallery and chambers above; and—strange contrivance—with pierced stone masks in the gallery wall, and in Tropenell's chamber wall, from which the ladies could watch the doings, and Tropenell could listen to the talk, in the hall below.

Soon, all over England, in the great peace which followed the accession of the Tudors, such houses were rising, on the site, very often, of the Domesday halls, or the dark and heavy Norman or Plantagenet houses which had replaced them. The fortified gateway became the lodge; the moat, if it was not wanted for swans, was filled up to make a garden. Light was more freely admitted, and draughts more carefully excluded. The joiner, the carver, the stone-cutter, the painter, the silversmith, felt the growing demand for their skill, and the broad windows began to glow with the arms of the family and its alliances, its friends and patrons, from one generation to another. They were built—or rebuilt—for the class to which Thomas Tropenell belonged, for gentlemen of blood and coat-armour, whose blood often becomes suspiciously thin when we have traced the pedigree as far as the grandfather. Now and then one of them shoots into fame and perilous greatness: a Cecil, a Seymour, a Dudley. But for the most part they do not aspire to rank. The great houses rise and fall, by battle, murder, and sudden death. The lesser families dig themselves in. They are satisfied to act as stewards to bishops and abbots and the great nobles whom they treat with profound and profitable reverence; to go once and again to Westminster as Knight of the Shire; to sit on grand juries; to pick up an estate here and an estate there; to marry their

children well; to do justice and observe hospitality. They keep their land together; younger sons must fend for themselves, in trade or at the Bar, by a lucky marriage or a happy appearance at Court. They are constantly replenished, invigorated, and educated, by traders, lawyers, and courtiers who return to invest their fortunes in the land; and the dissolution of the monasteries provides the King with a vast treasure from which to reward their loyalty.

Once, when Henry VIII was hunting, his horse pitched him head foremost into a pool of mud. He was pulled out by his yeoman, Moody. King Harry loved a Man, and indeed the service was one to command admiration as well as gratitude. Out of the forfeited estates of Malmesbury Abbey he gave him the manor of Garsden. The Moodys begin to go up in the world; they become, first gentlemen, then baronets. The fifth Moody, not liking the prospects for Puritans in 1640, sold Garsden to a Washington of Sulgrave, and retired to New England. Otherwise the successor of Yeoman Moody might have been summoned to Westminster Hall to sit in judgment on the successor of Henry VIII, because the gentlemen who in the fifteenth century had taken over the local government will grow so powerful, and so conscious of their power, that in the seventeenth century they will take over the royal government too. Indeed, one of them will some day be seen and heard walking in St. James's and putting the case to his companion: 'How if a man took on himself to be King?' Mr. Whitelocke of Fawley Court, Bucks, thought it would never do. Mr. Cromwell of Hinchbrook was not so sure. To such a height will the country house rise, on the ruins of the monasteries, and under the patronage of the Tudors.

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The sixteenth century is the decisive era in the evolution of the country gentleman and his home. 'The spring comes slowly up this way', but the breath of the Renaissance has fallen on the island at last. Of one great English house a foreign visitor wrote that 'it embodied the eternal craving of the North for the South'. In the houses of the later sixteenth century we can feel the touch of Italian science—proportion, balance, symmetry—working more and more powerfully on the transmitted Gothic instinct. The bowers arrange themselves more gracefully about the hall; a sense of mass and outline makes itself apparent now that the strong, high wall is no longer wanted. The E-house and the H-house emerge, as standard patterns, from the opening up of the 'little green court where you come in'. The smaller manors catch the feeling too, though here the Gothic instinct is more tenacious, and they show it in the more careful posing of the wings on either side the porch, and the poising of the gables above the windows. We are often aware of a certain youthful crudity, an exuberance of ornament, and trick-work even, on a homely background, in this Elizabethan and Jacobean blend of the Northern and Southern styles, just as we are aware of it in manners and literature. But a purer classicism is spreading among the patrons who commission houses and the craftsmen who design them, a freemasonry of taste and style which awaits, and will find, its accepted master in Inigo Jones.

As the country house under Elizabeth or James may be anything from a mediaeval manor, more or less adapted to modern standards of comfort, to a Renaissance palace, so the country gentleman may be, at one end of the scale, a cultivated and travelled

man, a patron and a collector, and, at the other, a rough-coated, rough-tongued rustic. The one thing that unites them all is the consciousness that they are gentlemen, and that a gentleman is not made in one generation or two. 'I think, Sir William, you are of the Duke of Somerset's family?' 'No, Your Majesty, the Duke of Somerset is of my family.' They are the justices, they are the officers of the militia, and they are accustomed to be obeyed, if it be only by Tom carter and Dick shepherd, and in more intimate ways by Moll the dairymaid. But, allied as they are by marriage, occupation, and interests—the farm, the hunt, the muster, the bench, the grand jury, the county election—they are none the less divided. Most of them heartily accept the Elizabethan settlement of religion, and worship by the Prayer Book. But many families stand by the Old Faith, and there are others who think that the Reformation did not go far enough, who disapprove of bishops, and would not be averse to a new confiscation, this time of the bishops' lands. The future cleavage of Whig and Tory is beginning to make itself felt. But of more consequence, perhaps, is the distinction between those who have stayed on the land where they were born, getting such learning as they might need from the grammar school or the curate in the church, and those who have been to Eton or Shrewsbury, to Oxford or Cambridge, have kept their terms at an Inn of Court, have kissed their Sovereign's hand at Whitehall, perhaps have sailed to discover islands far away, or at least have swum in a gondola at Venice; who are not content to be the leading men in their county, but have caught sight of a larger stage for authority and display, at Court, on Embassies, in the Council Chamber, in Parliament.

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With this we touch on a new idea—the notion of the country house as distinguished from the town house. Lords, spiritual or temporal, had often had their houses in London; Lambeth and Ely Place, Leicester House, Essex House, Barnard's Castle. But now, from the reign of James I, and with increasing rapidity, London is becoming a residential capital. We hear of Piccadilly and the Talk of the Town; we meet a young poet walking in the park, *suburbani nobilis umbra loci*, to admire the beauty of the London girls, and are, perhaps, a little surprised to recognize Mr. Milton, down from Cambridge. Indeed, the rapid growth of the new West End caused the Government some anxiety, and the Privy Council was obliged to intervene, to check unregulated building and to fix the prices in the more fashionable ordinaries. The Civil Wars did little to arrest a tendency which social circumstances made inevitable: whenever people have money in their purses they will go where they can spend it most freely; when they have not, they will go where they can pick it up most easily. Under the Commonwealth grave men were shocked by the display of horses and carriages, 'feathered men and spotted women', in Hyde Park, and could only record their satisfaction that His Highness at least was absent from these frivolities. When the King came back, even this consolation was lacking.

There is now a Town, and a Season, and at the end of the season the Town goes out of town to its country house, and the country house which had sheltered the dignity and expressed the pride of the great noble, the prosperous woolstapler, the successful lawyer, has begun to display and illustrate his refinement. Libraries have been formed; the portrait-

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gallery augmented by purchases from Italy and the Low Countries. Learned men are summoned to partake the hospitality and patronage of the great houses; craftsmen to adorn them. Soon England will be covered with masterpieces, great and small, the work often of unknown men who have learnt from Webb what Webb had learnt from Inigo, and Inigo had drawn from the fountain-head in Vicenza; unknown men, who could nevertheless, as part of their day's work, design a front that Sansovino might have approved, or throw out a cornice that Longhena might have envied. To carry the taste of Society into the country, to blend the elegance, refinement, wit, and activity of the metropolis with the old and dear delights, the sport and authority, hard drinking and hard riding of the shire; in return, to bring back into Parliament, into public life, and into literature, something of the earthy and kindly vigour of the country, that is, *testor lucos, et flumina, et dilectas villarum umbras*, the function of the country house in the days of Walpole and Fielding.

In creating this new function, the influence of London and the example of the Londoners were perhaps the determining factors. Within thirty years of the Revolution the capital was ringed with houses reflecting the taste of King William in their gardens, and of Queen Mary in their china. Some of them were the houses of the nobility who wished to be near Westminster. But far more were the houses of merchants who wished to be near the Exchange. 'Very few of them,' Defoe wrote in 1722, 'are the Mansion Houses of families, the Ancient Residences of Ancestors, the Capital Messuages of Estates; nor have the rich Possessors any Lands to a considerable Value about them. They are Houses

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of Retreat, Gentlemen's Summer Houses, or Citizens' Country Houses.' By 1750 the rush to the country was as marked a feature of a London summer as the rush to the seaside in 1850. Thirty years later Gibbon noticed that the fashion had spread to France, 'as a rural taste gains ground'. If it had gained ground a little earlier there might have been no French Revolution. The tidal inflow and outflow between London and the country, town house and country house, kept our social atmosphere sweet. It circulated wealth and improved communications. It diffused intelligence and manners. Above all, it created that large identity of interest between town and country, gentleman and citizen, landowner and manufacturer, which made Mr. Pitt the idol at once of the City and the country gentleman in one generation, and made Sir Robert Peel, a manufacturer's son, the leader of the Tory party in the next.

The country gentlemen who could not live, or did not share, this double life, sank, not indeed in their own esteem, but in the regard of the world. Formidable to their parson and their poachers, great men still to their farmers and copyholders, on a larger stage they begin to figure as Squire Western and Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone; or, drawn by a kinder pencil, as Sir Roger de Coverley and Sir Everard Waverley. Lower still, the class for which we have no name, but which in Ireland would have been the squireens, lives for us in Ensign Northington and Tony Lumpkin. Taken together, they form the bulk of the Stupid Old Tory Party. The Whigs are decidedly more fashionable, and, indeed, much of the parliamentary corruption of the eighteenth century came to little more than this, that an honest supporter

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who had swallowed his objections to the malt tax, or the employment of Hanoverian troops, was not above taking £500 from the whips with which to give his lady a season in London and his daughters lessons in music and drawing from the best masters, or to replace the worm-eaten Stuart furniture with the latest designs of Sheraton and Hepplewhite.

The old style lingered on at Westminster till the Reform Act of 1832.

Look at his loose, wide, brown coat, with capacious pockets on each side, the knee-breeches and boots, the immensely long waistcoat, and silver watch-chain dangling below it, the wide-brimmed brown hat, and the white handkerchief tied in a great bow, with straggling ends sticking out beyond his shirt-frill. He is a county Member.

Very likely you could tell from his speech whether he sat for Norfolk or Somerset. His son will be a county member too, but he will, in speech and attire, conform to the standards of his more refined age, and will debate the Corn Laws on the principles of Ricardo, or lecture to his tenants on Liebig's Agricultural Chemistry, in the purest English that Eton and King's can teach. The squireens will last into the nineteenth century too, until the railways catch them and civilize them, and fashion bids them quit the flagged and mullioned manor of their ancestors for something out of Loudon's *Villa Architecture*, something in stucco, or in brick and slate, with a drawing-room and a hot-water bath.

Another turn is impending. The country gentleman of the nineteenth century is an administrative and scientific man. His grandfather, so far as he conformed to the ideals of his class, was an artistic, and particularly an architectural, man; commonly

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a connoisseur, often a student, sometimes a practitioner. An observation of Gibbs admits us to a world of taste which had never existed before and was never to exist again:

Some, for want of better Helps, have unfortunately put into the hands of common Workmen, the management of Buildings of considerable expense; which, when finished, they have had the mortification to find condemned by persons of Taste, to that degree that sometimes they have been pull'd down, at least alter'd at a greater charge than would have procur'd better advice from an able Artist; or if they have stood, they have remained lasting Monuments of the Ignorance or Parsimoniousness of the Owners, or (it may be) of a Wrong-judged Profuseness.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the sense of pure design had begun to be confused by the growing taste for the Picturesque: the ruin, the hermitage, the awful grove, the solemn fane, the soaring pinnacle, and the enchanting vista terminated by a Gothick umbrella—or, quite possibly, by a pagoda. Our domestic Palladian had worked itself out into an exquisite but sterile propriety; in turn the neo-Romanism of Burlington and Kent, and the neo-Hellenism of Adam had their day; and now the New Age was at hand, an architectural Bacchanalia of which Fonthill and Sezincote are the heralds, Barry's reconstruction of Highclere the proclaimed masterpiece.

See, through the quiet land
Rioting they pass,
Fling the fresh heaps about,
Trample the grass.
Tear from the rifled hedge
Garlands, their prize,
Fill with their sports the field
Fill with their cries. . . .

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First Pointed! Second Pointed! Back to Elizabeth! Back to the Ages of Faith! French Gothic—Venetian Gothic—railway stations to look like Tudor halls, Swiss chalets brought down from their mountains to serve as lodges in the Vale of York, labourers' cottages vaguely suggestive of Nuremberg clocks, and parish schools intended to remind the cultivated observer of the tomb of Galla Placidia at Ravenna. This, the crowning example of Allusiveness in Architecture, may be seen at Mildenhall by Marlborough. For the rest, the curious may study Robinson's *Rural Architecture*, or visit Edensor.

The architectural sense had gone, but in its place the level advance of humanitarian feeling and science had imposed new duties on the country gentleman of the nineteenth century. His science was mainly directed to the improvement of the land, and his own revenue, by enclosure, drainage, and experiments in fertilizers and breeding. The standards of his class required it of him, and they required him also to be active for the housing, and, in alliance with the Church, for the education, of the people. I take at random the history of a small village, under a new and wealthy squire. He bought the property in 1828, and commissioned a pupil of Papworth's, James Thomson, to reconstruct the manor-house, which from sketches surviving would appear to have been a typical specimen of the symmetrical seventeenth-century style, executed in the local cornbrash. Under Thomson's hands it grew into something 'corresponding with the habits of refined modern society'. For our purpose, the dining-room and drawing-room, each thirty-three by twenty-four feet, 'with a large and lofty bay window to each', the library and the breakfast-room, are of less consequence than the

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treatment of the hall. It is still the central apartment, but it has been articulated into

a range of halls and vestibules, each differing in their arrangement, but of a uniform character. The inner hall is octagonal and surrounded by a carved stone gallery, behind which rise tall, slender pillars having ornamental capitals, whence open the ribs of a coved ceiling and a lanthorn light. The vestibule is terminated by an alcove, called the tribune. These halls are fitted with Italian bronzes, and the tribune is adorned by a beautiful statue of Venus Verticordia executed by Gibson at Rome.

It is the old union of Northern comfort and Southern grace, but rendered in a new idiom.

The gardens are surrounded by a wall one thousand feet in length, covered on both sides with the choicest fruit trees, and the farming houses include a pinery and a vinery one hundred and eighty feet long, and extensive melon pits. The stables provide accommodation for a stud of fifty horses.

Domus optima, vinea bona !

But Mr. Thomson was an expert in cottages, as well as in stables and tribunes: cottages meant to be 'warm, dry, and comfortable, and so more desirable to the occupant than the village ale-house'. 'To each cottage is attached a garden and a pigstye, and a most pleasing effect produced in the habits and manners of their inmates', that is, presumably, of the cottages. But the whole parish felt the hand of the benevolent improver, in the condition of its roads, farm-houses, hedges, and plantations.

Remembering what the parish was more than 60 years ago when the roads were almost impassable for carriages in winter months, the labourers' cottages unfitted to protect their inmates from cold and wet, and even the farm houses but little better, I cannot but hail with much gratification their greatly

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improved state to-day [1843]. The farm houses with their appendages afford comfort and almost luxuries to their occupants, who are also provided with good and sound roads for the conveyance of produce to the neighbouring markets: the cottages are provided with water and drainage: every inhabitant has the privilege of an allotment and the poor rates are only 3s. in the pound.

Go a few miles and see what you will find, in the mid-fifties, at the peak of rural prosperity.

The labouring population are very indifferently housed. The dwelling rooms are few and small: the sleeping accommodation is not decent: wells are infrequent: the drainage is defective. The population is decreasing. There are no pretty bridal customs. The same remark applies to games and amusements: we have next to none. There were, indeed, ten years since, the remains of a Michaelmas revel, but the excise officers and the police stopped it. We ought to be healthy, but it is no one's business to drain the common. There, 17 children died of scarlet fever in three months. The cause was patent: on the common the soil is a rotten sponge which would hardly bear the weight of man or beast. We have the remains of an old pack road. The turn-pike is insolvent. The causeway is out of repair.

And the reason?

This state of affairs is no more than might be expected in a parish where the landed proprietors, being non-resident, want that interest in the people which would naturally arise from personal communication. The poor here are not neighbours to the rich.

Two passages like these, placed side by side, furnish the clue to much Victorian history and still more Victorian declamation. A resident, unencumbered squire, *par negotiis neque supra*; progressive farmers; a village not over-populated, and furnished with pure water, good houses, allotments, and a school, together formed one of the most successful

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experiments in social organization that England had seen. The squire might be insolvent, encumbered, or an absentee. The farmers might be unintelligent. The labourers might be undernourished. There were many points at which the experiment could go wrong. But, when it went right, the country house did unquestionably provide a nucleus of culture and a basis of order and progress which nothing else could have furnished, and history must allow that when Prince Albert said:

the country gentleman with his wife and children, the country clergyman, the tenant, and the labourer, still form a great, and I hope united, family, in which we gladly recognize the foundation of our social state,

he spoke no more than the truth.

Anyone familiar with our early landscape-painters must have noticed that though, as he goes about the country, he will constantly observe Crome skies and Constable cornfields, the broad spaces of De Wint and the tinted clouds of Varley, never will he see a village as they saw it. On the other hand, whenever he comes upon a cottage group which recalls a picture with figures, the chances are that the artist will be Birket Foster. He is pre-eminently the painter of that finished countryside, of that 'jewelled and enamelled neatness' which high farming under strict covenants had imposed on the vague and various landscape of the unscientific, unromantic age. We may regret that he was not a greater artist. But his merit and value as the recorder of an historic phase are not thereby impaired. His Quakerly blood, perhaps, gave him a particular interest in the landscape in which he grew up, in the industry, the regularity,

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the tidiness of it all; in well-ploughed acres and well-behaved children;

all things in order stored,

whether in cottages or farms, or the glades and vistas of the halls which dominated and directed the farm, built the cottages and educated the children, and took their reward, as Johnson had once said, 'in money and homage'.

If one had to select the moment when the country house was at its apogee, one might take the year 1854, when Waagen brought out his *Art Treasures of Great Britain*. Prices were high, and the harvest the most abundant on record. Over England as a whole, the yield of wheat passed thirty-four bushels to the acre; on favoured land it was over fifty bushels; stock-breeders and engineers could not satisfy the world's demand for English cattle and agricultural machinery. The railway net was practically complete, and it had covered the country with another net of hospitality, visits, and correspondence. If we set aside the definitely industrial areas, England was still a place of villages and little towns, over which the landed interest was dominant. The Reform Act had not seriously impaired its ascendancy. Free Trade had not diminished its wealth. High farming was the order of the day, and the results were visible in the growing rent-roll. The land was coining money, and the money flowed out, through the local bank to the London bank, from the London bank to the bill-broker, to finance the manufacturer, the shipper, and the merchant.

The development of communications, in which Dr. Arnold saw the end of feudalism, did in fact raise the country house to its final and brief splendour. By

one of those unexpected turns which constantly meet us in history, it elevated the great house at the expense of the lesser houses. The squire's consequence diminished in the eyes of his neighbours, who could now go to London and there see for themselves with what grandeur Bowood and Woburn took the town; who could read for themselves of the fairy splendours of the Eglinton Tournament and the Chatsworth conservatories; who could visit a dozen palaces in a holiday tour, and study, as their taste preferred, Lord Darlington's model farm at Staindrop, the statuary of Ince Blundell, the pictures of Drayton, or the Duke of Bedford's cottages. Foreigners were dazed and the natives were dazzled, less by the accumulation than by the diffusion of wealth, of wealth which, whether it was drawn from trade or manufacture, from the East Indies or the West, could only display its full magnificence when it had been returned to the land. But apart altogether from those aspects of it which are preserved to us in Turner's 'Drawing Room at Petworth', or in those not less gorgeous descriptions, written half in mockery, half in adoration, with which the intellectual comedy of Disraeli's novels is diversified, this phase in the history of the country house had more sober and lasting consequences. Our public administration, even as we see it to-day, is in no small degree modelled on the administration of a great estate in the days when, in the nature of things, Cabinet Ministers belonged to the class of great landed proprietors, and were familiar, therefore, with the organization and control of a large and highly specialized staff.

The social brilliancy and the political authority of the country house were the flower of its economic solidity, a solidity won by two generations of

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vigorous, scientific, often ruthless improvement, but precariously poised on the balance of home-grown and foreign-grown wheat. The tendency, visible from a very early date in our history, towards the aggregation of holdings was now working at full power, and the Continental visitor was at once impressed with the perfection of English farming and the exorbitant size of English estates. Many English observers contemplated the process with misgiving. Socially, the spectacle of a class almost inaccessible rich and splendid was harmful, they thought, to the independence and culture of the people as a whole. Economically, the restraints on the sale of land, the law which gave the apparent owner only a life-interest in his property and transmitted it intact to one son, hampered improvement and checked the inflow of new brains and new money on to the land. By 1865 political speculators were very busy with the future, with the abolition of entail, the reconstitution of the peasant-holder or the owner-occupier as a class, the construction of agricultural Co-operative Societies. They need not have troubled. Nature has her own way of dealing with institutions which do not fit their age.

An observer in another planet might have remarked in the seventies a new phenomenon on the surface of the earth. Except in England, the gold was increasing against the green. He would rightly have inferred that a change of cultivation was in progress. He could not have known that he was watching the end of a social order.

The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling through the dark . . .

The disastrous summer of that year 1879 was the

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beginning of a time of calamity which stretched to 1894, the driest summer within memory. The grazing counties came through with heavy but not fatal loss. The corn counties were stricken. There was a saying that with wheat at 50s. farming began to pay after twenty-eight bushels had been got from the acre. After 1877 it never touched 50s. again, and the harvest of 1879 did not reach sixteen bushels. In 1884 the price dipped below 40s.; in 1894 wheat was at 22s.; and indeed the harvest of that year of panic sold at 19s.; one German visitor wrote that soon not a wall or a tree would be seen for miles in England, and the whole rotten fabric would collapse in ruins. Another, better equipped and more sympathetic, laid his finger on the worst symptom of desolation. 'All over Norfolk', he wrote, 'the Halls are shut up.' 'Take it away', the last Doge of Venice said, as he handed the Ducal cap to his attendant, 'I shall not want it again.'

The magnitude and finality of the disaster to the landed interest was indeed masked by the fact that the surplus profit of the land had long been stored away in urban property, in bank stock and Consols, in commercial investments at home and abroad. The ancient distinction of land and money was passing away; and, thanks to the development of the limited-liability company, the landlord was able to remit his rents and maintain his mansion out of his earnings as a brewer, a banker, a tea merchant, a proprietor of railways in France and docks in America. The difference between those who stayed at home and those who went to London had reasserted itself in a new shape, in the difference between those who had something to draw upon, and those who had not. Thus, though the loss of annual and capital value in

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the years of depression was enormous, the fabric did not collapse so rapidly as the German visitor anticipated. The plutocracy was ready enough to take over the deserted halls, and the surviving aristocracy was itself plutocratic. Gradually the land righted itself, with milk and meat and vegetables in place of wheat; to a careless observer in 1900, looking, for example, to the great houses which were rising under the hands of Philip Webb and Norman Shaw, the landed interest might have seemed as solidly established as in 1850. Actually its roots had been cut. *Tole questo : no la dopero piu.*

Looking at the matter in historic perspective, we may say that the hereditary landed interest ceased to be indispensable when the nation had created other and more effective organs of government and administration, culture and order, benevolence and science, in the rural regions. Ceasing to be indispensable, it had either to earn a new standing for itself or to disappear, and the process of extinction, deliberately expedited by Liberal finance, has in our time been further accelerated by the unforeseen and unprecedented burden of war taxation.¹ In these circumstances the natural destiny of the great house which cannot support itself on its revenues is to be converted to public use, as a county building like Trentham, a school like Stowe or Weston Birt, a country club or a residential hotel. Other purposes can doubtless be contrived. Colleges at Oxford and Cambridge used to have Pest Houses, to which their members could retire in time of plague. Westminster School had one at Chiswick. Why should they not acquire country houses, for reading parties in the vacation? When the house is in itself and its

¹ I may remind the reader that all this was written in 1934.

surroundings a work of art, when it harbours a famous collection of pictures, books, tapestries, and furniture, then, as Lord Lothian has suggested, the owner might fairly ask that, in return for admitting the public to enjoy its treasures, and keeping the house and estate in good condition, he should receive special consideration in the matter of estate duties. The family, in fact, would become hereditary custodians of a national monument; their taxation would be so adjusted that they might remain hereditary: if after all they were obliged to sell, the estate would pass under the same easements and advantages.

On the other hand, the smaller houses, which are less costly to maintain, will, with the development of communications, become more and more suburban. Already the Londoner can be in the Chilterns or the Kentish Weald in less time than it took Mr. Grote or Mr. Angerstein to reach his Blackheath villa. The inducements which in former ages drew rich townsmen into the country—a safe return on their investment, consideration, authority, gentility, rank—are ceasing to operate. The grand jury has gone; the prospect of becoming a justice of the peace no longer figures in the advertisements of house-agents; as a local administrator the country gentleman's chief function is to back the intelligence of his experts against the penuriousness of his rate-payers, the Medical Officer against the local builder, the Director of Education against the farmer; to be urgent with town-planning, to protect what is left to be protected against the ribbon and the pylon, to lead in the advance towards better standards of building and greater care for the surviving amenities of the country. Taken together, they are not unim-

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portant duties, and they are not unrewarded. What more is left for him to do seems to depend entirely on that incalculable element, our agricultural future. It is better not to speculate, but Clio always has a trick or two up her sleeve, and who can say that we shall not some day see Edward of Salisbury back in his excellent house, under his old titles of Shire Reeve and Vice-Comes, new-translated, as District Bailiff and Deputy Director of the County Plan?

THE VILLAGE¹

*I love my Home; and it affordes some Ease
To ken far off the smoaking Villages.*

THE oddest thing about an English village is that we have to call it by a French name. Left to ourselves we should have spoken of *boroughs* and *towns*. Chaucer once uses *village*, but only in prose. In verse he calls it a *town*.

Wite ye not wher ther stant a litil toun
Which that y-cleped is Bob-up-and-down,
Under the Blee, in Caunterburye weye?

Harbledown, to wit. In translating S. Mark vi. 56, where the Vulgate has

in vicos, vel in villas, aut in civitates,

Wycliffe writes

villages, towns, or cities.

Tyndale also, but following the order of the Greek, has

towns, cities, or villages.

Geneva writes

towns, cities, or country.

And finally, the Authorised Version has

villages, cities, or country.

¹ First published as an Introduction to *English Villages and Hamlets* by Humphrey Pakington (Batsford, 1934)

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It was, I think, the free use to which Shakespeare and the translators of 1611 put the word that made it the popular term for something distinct from, and smaller than, a town. In Milton the modern sense is affirmed, and with it the modern sentiment—

As one who long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight,
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound.

But this is the townsman's idea of the village, and tells us rather what a village feels like than what it is. What is it? And here analogy comes to our aid. Via—viaticum—voyage: the way and all the business of the way. Villa—villaticum—village: the vill and all its doings. Vill is the lawyer's word for a number of houses, with their lands, more or less contiguous, and under a common organization. But the common organization is the thing that makes the vill, just as in another way it makes the borough. It was, I think, the sense of organization, rotation, distribution of duties, that was uppermost in the minds of our ancestors when they thought of a *tun*, or *toun* or *town*. They carried it with them into the boroughs, and it is embodied for us in such terms as town-clerk and town-hall, where we might have expected to find borough-clerk and borough-hall. But in the country, the lawyers, always engrossed with manorial business, the descent of lands, and the rights of lords and tenants, had it all their own way. They were able to pass their French word over the counter, and compel the language to accept it as current coin of the realm.

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A village, then, is an organization. For what purpose? For the one purpose which was really vital to those early settlers who planted themselves in the devastated and ruined province of Britain. Here and there, no doubt, one comes on a village the position of which seems to have been prescribed by considerations of defence. Pewsey, for example, in Wiltshire, is built in the wrong place. It ought to have been planted three-quarters of a mile to the west to take advantage of the ancient highway leading from the Kennet to the Avon. The founders preferred to post themselves in a loop of the river, on a spur which a stockade could easily have turned into a fortress. But such examples are very rare. The settlers' main business was to feed themselves: to make the earth yield a harvest. And we may be quite sure that they planted their houses exactly at the most advantageous point for people who had to economize every ounce of muscular effort for themselves and their oxen. Students of Saxon documents and place-names have observed how keen an eye the Saxon had for a gradient, marking, for example, as a hill what to us is barely a rise in the ground. It was a ploughman's eye that he measured by, and the muscles of a ploughman's back: and we must think of our villages as so many ploughmen's camps, which in the end took root and stayed there: stayed sometimes, like Myndtown in Shropshire, within their enclosing hedge until this day.

I have often wished that the Ordnance Survey would produce a series of County Maps, showing nothing but hills and rivers; parish churches and boundaries as they were, say, in 1830; and the principal roads. I should like them done on transparent paper, which could be laid down on the

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coloured geological maps. It is, as a rule, safe to assume that the parish church is at, or near, the nuclear point of the village, and such a map would show, first how the village lies in relation to its lands, and then how its lands lie in relation to the strata. The village, regarded as an object which can be visited, photographed, enjoyed, and spoiled, is after all only an antique—a genuine antique, no doubt, and often a very beautiful one. But that is not the whole of the village: it is not the most important, it is not the most interesting, part of it. It is not even the oldest. Though the church may have Saxon work in it, there is something, something visible and tangible, which is older still; and no one can understand a village, or even see it properly, until he has walked the parish bounds. The village is the settlers' camp: the village lands are the thing itself.

Go to Broughton Giffard. The most remarkable thing about Broughton is its shape—a round kite with a green in the middle, a tail—the Causeway—a mile long, and the church at the end of the tail. The explanation is that Broughton is a village with an industrial suburb attached to it. The nucleus is at the southern end, where the church and the great farm stand. But Trowbridge was calling for woollen yarn, and the people of Broughton pushed north into the waste and woodland, hutting round the green, where the spinning-sheds stood, and living, I gather, under the sanitary conditions appropriate to an industrial suburb. The woollen trade passed away, and Broughton returned to its sunny and pastoral peace, leaving its shape to puzzle the wayfarer, who is looking for the church and can only find the chapel.

Indeed, I know no way of travel more remunerative, more stimulating to the fancy, and even to the

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eye, than to go slowly from village to village, asking why. Why is it here? What is it doing? Why is it that shape? Why is this church in the squire's garden, that one in the middle of the street, a third in the farmyard? Why does this group of villages post itself so carefully half a mile from the road, and that group string itself in a ribbon along the river? Why is Chalk Church and Cheese Chapel? Aubrey posed the question three hundred years ago, and the answer was given by Canon Goddard only the other day. His solution (and I believe it to be the right one) is that on the chalk each village clusters tightly together by its river or spring-head, to be sure of water. The church is always in sight, and whether it be church ales or sermons, the villagers have their spiritual entertainment at their doors. In a grazing country the village breaks up into detached settlements and hamlets, not of set purpose, but because the cows know exactly how far they intend to walk from their grass to their dairy. These outliers fall out of touch with their church: unless the parson goes his rounds diligently, they will welcome the travelling gospeller with his novel message: they will become in one age Anabaptists, in another Wesleyans. It is an old story. Chaucer's Parson

ne lafte not, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferrest in his parisshe, much and lyte,

or the Lollard wolf would have been down upon the fold at once.

It is here, in the relation of the village people to their soil and their crops, and their common subjection to Nature, that the real life and continuity, in a word the meaning, of a village lies. It is a singular

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but true reflection that, commonly, the oldest thing we see as we pass through a village is perhaps eight centuries younger than the village itself—hardly older, on that scale, than the new tea lounge!—and that it took perhaps a thousand years of rebuilding to produce the perfection of Castle Combe or Great Tew. Our villages are, as it were, the capital letters constantly renewed on a palimpsest, where the text has been written and rewritten, but where even the earliest and faintest writing may at moments become visible. I know one which, in a country of regular and symmetrical parish-patterns, makes a long arm to take in a particular estate. So it did in the year 825. From various indications I suspected that the boundary must have been so drawn to include a Romano-British farm—whether abandoned or still working, I should not like to guess. If it were so, then that boundary could hardly be later than the year 600. We dug, and we found the farm.

But here a further reflection must occur. The land has seen great changes in the past: the change from the hill-cultivation of the Briton, which has marked the downs with those lines that come and go at sunrise and sunset, to the valley-cultivation of the Saxon, which fixed our villages on the map; the break-up of the manorial economy in the later Middle Ages, which created the farmer, the copyholder, the yeoman; the enclosures of the eighteenth century, which divorced the labourer from the land; the high-farming of the mid-nineteenth century, which made the land yield such harvests as it had never yielded before; the agricultural depression of the late Victorian age and the reversion from corn to grass; the division of great estates; the decline of great houses, under the pressure of Estate Duties and

Income-tax. But, all through, the village persisted, as a function of the unchanging pace of a man, an ox, or a horse. Our pace is that of the machine. How, I sometimes ask myself, would a new band of pioneers, with the intelligence and equipment of to-day, set to work to earn their living here? How should we set to work, if ever we were forced to live once more on our home-grown food? I can only ask the question. I cannot answer it. But on the answer, I fancy, depends in no small measure the future of the village. Is it an economic mode of rural organization, or is it not? If it is, it will stay. If it is not, it will have to go, or be put to new uses, as a dormitory for townsmen, a retreat for brain workers, an almshouse for retired citizens.

But until we know the answer (which may indeed be different on different soils, one thing in the dry, light East and another in the deep and rainy West) we should do very ill-advisedly not to preserve, to quicken, and to develop, what beauty, life, and utility remain in a fabric once so vigorous and still so winning. One question indeed I can answer. My farming friends tell me that the countryman is not so good a workman as he was. The remark is, I think, first set down in an Egyptian document of 1680 B.C. I can see for myself that he is a far more highly civilized man. It is now forty years since I first began to take notice of the country about me: and the improvements I have seen in the decency, sobriety, and good humour of our villages, in the dress, the carriage, the speech, and habits of the people, give me confidence, when I recall some old scene of dusty, dreary village squalor, that the future will in the long run be even better than the past. We are, no doubt, passing through an ugly phase. But I have no great

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love for potted landscapes, and I shall join no Society for Putting England under a Glass Case. Rather, I think, our business, while waiting for time to show its hand, is to infuse into the reviving vigour and independence of the country people, the determination to preserve their country themselves. When our grandfathers spoke of a neglected village, they condemned the squire and the parson. I am not at all without hope that, in a few years, to call a village ugly will be taken by the villagers as a condemnation of themselves, for not keeping their builders, their shopkeepers, and their advertisers under better control.

GOVERNMENT¹

I

EVERY government that has been in this world, or is ever likely to be, is a system of injunctions and restraints: do this—abstain from that. It may be more, but that it must be. And in the last analysis we can determine the distinguishing character of the system by asking: What is the authority behind the command? According to the answer, we have the types of government familiar in the tradition of the schools—monarchic, aristocratic, popular, with all their variations and compromises. But if we ask: How did it come to be authority? then we leave the field of political science or philosophy and commit ourselves to history. Or, to put it another way, every institution raises two questions: one, Why does it exist? and the other, Why should it exist? If I am charged with some serious offence I am tried before a jury. Many reasons doubtless could be given why I should be. But to explain why I am it would be necessary to go back many hundred years and observe that jury gradually disentangling itself from other ways of trial—possessory assizes and presentments, wager of battle and ordeal—and establishing itself, by experiment, as the best way of getting at the truth.

So regarded, politics is an experimental science,

¹ First published in *The Character of England*, edited by Sir Ernest Barker (Oxford, 1947)

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and history is the record of the experiments. But men cannot be experimenting everywhere and all the time. So, in the life of a nation, we are aware of two elements which need to be kept in adjustment—the irrational element of custom, tradition, habit, making for stability, and the rational, critical element making for improvement. Whatever it be, our food, our wages, our prospects, or the weather, we are constantly passing judgment in the form—this is good and I should like to keep it: this is bad and I should like a change: this is tolerable but it might be better. These judgments, applied to the institutions of a country, set its political course from one generation to another: and public opinion is the summing up, at one time and on one topic, of a debate, a conversation, which is going on all the time and on every topic. From which it follows that a good government is one whose injunctions and restraints are found, in the long run and on the whole, to be in accordance with the views of those who have taken some trouble to inform themselves, have thought things out and talked them over with their neighbours, and come to the conclusion that things are best left alone, or that they should be changed this way or that. Theirs, we may say, is the authority behind the command: and as it is their command, they will see that it is enforced.

This conception of public opinion, forming and exercising itself through an uncensored Press and open discussion, and acting as the ultimate regulator of politics, first becomes articulate and clear in the generation succeeding the Battle of Waterloo. In the great struggle over the Reform Bill, we see the customary and critical elements almost in arms against each other on an issue which could not be evaded. Are the middle classes as a whole capable of a sound

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judgment in politics or are they not? Do they in fact take trouble to inform themselves, do they think things out and talk them over with their neighbours? If you say no, how do you explain the astonishing progress which England is visibly making in all the other arts of life? If you say yes, how can you justify the exclusion of the middle classes from the franchise, from all participation in the art of politics?

With the passing of the Bill in 1832 the ascendancy of public opinion was formally acknowledged. Materially, the traditional and habitual element of deference to the old legislative class, the nobility and gentry, showed an unexpected tenacity of life. The classical conception of the Mixed Constitution—a balance of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—still kept its dominion over men's minds: not the less, perhaps, because of a certain mystery surrounding the Crown. What did it do? When the younger Pitt, silently and decorously, but quite firmly and plainly, transferred the greater part of the royal authority to the Cabinet, what had he left? If Parliament had passed an Act that all powers exercisable by the Crown should henceforth be exercised by five privy councillors chosen by lot, what difference would anyone have noticed or would anyone notice to-day? A certain absence of splendour, perhaps: five elderly gentlemen driving down to open Parliament would be so unimpressive that our sense of humour would probably abolish the ceremony altogether, the most august ceremony, perhaps, surviving in the world. And would anyone be the worse? To the question—Why is there a Monarchy?—the answer is simple. Down to the seventeenth century few had thought of any other form of national headship. The Republican experiment showed that no more convenient and

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attractive form could be thought of. Successive changes of dynasty left the Monarchy itself untouched: it was not so much an institution as a form of political thought. But the nineteenth century was intensely critical of all forms of thought, whether in Church or State, which could not justify themselves by reason, and in 1837, when Victoria came to the throne, it was very far from certain that public opinion, the opinion of the middle classes, would tolerate the survival of an institution which to a radical eye was no more than an expensive fiction, certainly useless, perhaps mischievous.

The reactions of human nature towards a man, or woman, in exalted place may range from hatred to idolatry. But among them there is one to which the students of political philosophy seem not to attach so much importance as it merits—affection: and in the history of the English constitution one of the most important facts is that people were very fond of George III, the Berkshire gentleman who gave organs to churches and wrote papers, signed Ralph Robinson, in the agricultural journals. They liked to see him riding in Windsor Park or bathing at Weymouth: to repeat stories of his good nature, his courage, his memory for faces, his simplicity, his piety, his patience in affliction. It is, after all, more agreeable to be fond of people than to dislike them: and no doubt there is something in human nature which is gratified by liking people of exalted rank: the object elevates the sentiment, and the sentiment once evoked will not be content without an object. George III gave to the Monarchy something at once of domestic intimacy and domestic sanctity. Victoria inherited a part which she could not have created, which, without Prince Albert, she could hardly have

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sustained. But she did sustain it, and the republicanism, both rational and sentimental, of the nineteenth century was thrown into shadow by the glow of personal affection which, in the end, surrounded the old queen.

Yet, if things had fallen otherwise, it may be questioned whether affection alone would have kept the Monarchy in being. There was another claimant to popular regard—the Leader. The affair of 1835, when King William accepted Melbourne's too willing resignation and sent for Peel to form a government, proved in the outcome that when two parties are in the field the party which has a majority in the House of Commons has a constitutional right to office. In 1880 we went one step farther. Victoria was more than willing to keep Gladstone out of Downing Street. But the victorious party left her in no doubt that Gladstone it must be, and Gladstone it was. In choosing a leader the party does in fact decide who shall be Prime Minister if ever it comes into power, and it is hardly conceivable that the Crown should do other than accept its choice.

The situation is different when, as happened in the years of confusion after 1846, parties are broken and no clear line of division behind which they can arrange themselves is apparent. Then, admittedly, the Crown has a duty to help the country, we may say, to find the Government it wants. Someone, after all, must be commissioned to form an administration; this commission can only proceed from the Crown; and the Crown, in such cases, must try, in effect, to anticipate the judgment of Parliament, and estimate who is most likely to command a majority. It is the one personal decision which the Constitution requires the sovereign to make.

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Confidence, then, in the wisdom and impartiality of the Crown, is the second element in the public attitude to the Monarchy. A sovereign who was disliked might be endured in hope of better things to come. A sovereign who was distrusted might be the last of his line. And the wearer of the Crown is a human being, subject to all the human limitations of age, experience, character, and capacity. A man of sixty who has seen administrations come and go, and has been intimate with the leading statesmen of a generation or more, clearly will carry more weight with his ministers than a young sovereign new to his duties and charged with the natural partialities of youth. On the other hand we have fair evidence from the acknowledgments of a line of ministers that nothing does a politician so much good as having to explain things to the King. He cannot, as Johnson said, be in a passion; he cannot rant; he cannot rely on the phrases which sometimes pass muster for reasons in Parliament. He may find himself confronted with experience far wider than his own, the winnowed and hoarded experience which almost serves for instinct. And he knows that to whatever height of power and popularity he may have risen, he is not in the long run nearly so interesting a figure to the public as the man to whom he is talking. He is the servant of the people—until they dismiss him: their leader, perhaps, so long as they choose to follow. That other is their head: and the stability which it is the prime object of every Constitution to assure is with us best pictured as a domestic stability; a projection, almost, of that primitive and most intense desire, the desire of the child for safety in the home. Anyone who remembers the Abdication must own that in the English feeling for the Crown there

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is something deeper than can be calculated by the canons of political science.

II

It is in the nature of things that, where government by party is the rule, public men should never be wholly trusted and never generally liked. In the hundred years following the Reform, Palmerston, perhaps, was the only Prime Minister for whom the public at large felt any real and lasting affection. And the closing decade of Palmerston's long life saw England in an almost dream-like serenity of well-being. Only at his death did party spring to life again, and the field was set for the great encounter of Disraeli and Gladstone, which gave a new colour to the office of Prime Minister. Pitt had defined it as carrying the chief weight in the counsels of ministers, and the first place in the confidence of the Crown. Peel deliberately, but with all the caution and restraint of his character, had, in the Tamworth manifesto, addressed himself to the electorate as a body. But agitation in the country was out of keeping with the senatorial conception of Parliament, as a body which directed the Government, and did not itself need to be directed by any force from without. A general election gave the House of Commons its commission to conduct affairs of state in a Tory way or a Whig way for the next six years or so; and within those easy limits Parliament was free. The conception of the party leader as demagogue, making his appeal to the masses direct, was created by Gladstone, and carried forward into the next age by Chamberlain, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Lloyd

George. To Pitt's definition we must add—and holding a conspicuous place in the eye of the electorate.

But a place which he has reached by parliamentary service. The processes which conduct a man to the front bench are very intricate. The Crown appoints on the advice of the Prime Minister, and what balance of unrevealed considerations directs the Prime Minister's selection is a question to which no general or simple answer can ever be given. But, on the whole, it is fairly safe to say that the deciding element is parliamentary standing. The House of Commons is a very good judge of what it wants, and its collective sense indicates pretty plainly from what group or circle the chief offices had best be filled, and the Cabinet therefore constructed. Every government contains a few surprise appointments. But they are rarely numerous or startling. If the victorious party in Parliament settled the principal appointments by vote the result would probably not differ greatly from the Prime Minister's choice. And, if the party is in harmony with itself, it has already nominated the Prime Minister by accepting him as leader. If it is not, then either it must close its ranks and heal its dissensions or it will fall to pieces, and its chance of office has gone. To be a good and acceptable Prime Minister a man should be at once a popular figure, a party figure, and a parliamentary figure: and it would be interesting, though very difficult, to estimate in what proportion these qualifications have been blended in those who have held the office in the last hundred years. Popularity comes and goes: from the moment he is chosen, a leader becomes the object of all manner of internal jealousy and intrigue: but, in office or in opposition,

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an achieved reputation for parliamentary capacity is an abiding gift.

III

His Majesty's Servants, as they are inscribed in the summons to a Cabinet Meeting, may be defined as a Committee of the Privy Council, a Committee of Lords and Commons in Parliament, or a Committee of the party in power as a result of the last election. And all three definitions would be historically true. By usage, more powerful than any law, a mediaeval king was required to take counsel regularly with his great men. Their concurrence was needed to any departure in policy, any substantial change of custom, and any tax beyond the ordinary payments due to the sovereign as lord of the land. They were also a court of justice in suits among themselves or between one of their number and the Crown. But, as a matter of convenience, the king needed a council of another sort: educated men who could see to his revenue and expenditure, regulate his household, advise him on the customs of the country, and, in his name, do justice in all common cases, it might be at Westminster, it might be in the shires. An admirable instrument of government, regular, efficient, well informed, and, if discreetly wielded, a highly popular instrument, bringing the king's own justice within reach of the small freeholder, the mercer, and the wool-broker. But, in the hands of an avaricious or self-willed king, it was a dangerous instrument, charged with menacing possibilities. These permanent counsellors, though for dignity they may be called knights and barons, were, after all, only the

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king's clerks. How were they to be kept in their place and the king's business still carried on?

First of all it was necessary to state with as much clearness as possible what the rights and powers of the Crown really were: to mark out its acknowledged and lawful sphere of activity; to indicate what would be regarded as encroachment and what was allowed as the custom of the land. The second step was to call into existence a body with a common resolution to see that the bounds once set were observed. Of these two aims, one was attained by Magna Carta: the other by the assembling of a body which should be something more than a council of great men, something more than an inner group of professional advisers. They were both there; but along with them were the rural knights who knew what the country was thinking, the burgesses who knew how a tax could best be raised and where the burden would fall; and the merchants who understood—if the king needed money for a foreign war—how to raise a loan in Florence or discount a bill on Ghent. Whether this body, which somehow or other came to be called Parliament, was a conference, a court, or a legislature, we should, if we had attended one of its earliest meetings, have found it exceedingly difficult to say. It was everything all at once. But, somehow again, it established in the process of years two propositions—that no other body could make a new law and no other body could levy a new tax.

At the same time that inner council was, by professional necessity, dividing into two—those who administered the king's justice and those who managed the king's affairs. It is this second group that ultimately emerges as a Cabinet. They are the king's creatures—can they sit in the House of Commons,

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there to seduce and perhaps intimidate honest knights and burgesses by their control of the royal purse, by threats of the royal indignation? Can a man do his duty by Parliament and the king at once? On the other hand, can Parliament do its work properly unless it is fully advised of the royal policy and the state of the royal exchequer? And who can advise it so well as those privy councillors who are charged with the great offices of state, the Lord High Treasurer, the Lord High Admiral, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary? If they are peers they have of right a seat and voice in the Higher House. Are the Commons, then, to be excluded from great office?

In the end the issue settled itself. As with Parliament, so with the Cabinet: we cannot point to a day or a year when it passed from possibility to actuality: we can only say that in 1690 there was no Cabinet and in 1710 there was. His Majesty's Servants were no longer a Committee of Privy Councillors chosen by the king: they were not quite a Committee of the party in power: they were a Committee of Lords and Commons designated for office by their standing in Parliament and the country, and their known conformity with the views and policy of the Crown. One step remained to be taken. When it became acknowledged law that the views and policy of the Crown were determined by the party having a majority in the House of Commons, then the Cabinet of necessity became a committee of that party. The evolution was complete—from the king choosing his own servants to the Prime Minister choosing his own colleagues very much on the same grounds as he himself was chosen leader: parliamentary standing, party standing, public regard. None of which, nor

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all of them together, necessarily make a good administrator.

Almost every Cabinet contains some members who are there for no better reason than that they could not be left out. And the burden of their shortcomings must be borne by all their colleagues jointly, unless the peccant minister relieves them by resigning. 'A united Cabinet? There never was such a thing.' The doctrine of Cabinet solidarity, or collective responsibility, does not mean that in council differences of opinion are to be concealed. It means that, when deliberation is ended and decisions taken, a Minister who cannot conscientiously act any longer with his colleagues must make way for someone who can. While deliberation is proceeding he must not publish his differences. Only if he resigns may he state his reasons, and then by the permission—which is never refused—of the Crown. Whether the internal dissensions of His Majesty's Servants should be made known to the sovereign is a fine point of constitutional propriety on which the highest authorities have differed. Gladstone kept the door of the Cabinet room firmly closed against the Queen. Disraeli entertained her freely with reports of what his rebels were doing and what he meant to do with them. It is understood that modern practice allows the Prime Minister to lay before the Crown, in matters of the first importance, a statement of diverse views upheld in Cabinet.

IV

But the Cabinet is a secret conclave of privy councillors bound by oath to tender to the Crown such advice as in their conscience they think right.

Parliament, except on rare occasions in time of war, meets in public and is for the most part engaged in keen disputation. Its rules of discipline are therefore very different. As an assembly, it is governed entirely by standing orders of its own making, applied by a Speaker of its own choosing; and those orders, which have been in regular evolution from Tudor times, show the House continually adjusting itself to its double part of a debating assembly and a sovereign legislature. In its search for good ministers the House of Commons is limited to those members whom the electorate has seen fit to send to Westminster. But what is the prime qualification for entrance within those historic walls? Since it is impossible for all the king's subjects to seek election, on what principle should the pre-selection be made?

Under the old constitution, the constitution which Burke and Canning, Peel and Wellington were equally ready to defend against innovation, the answer was on this wise. In the well-ordered state of England, certain families, chosen by a natural process which everybody understood and nobody could explain, were always available to furnish the House with members and the Crown with ministers. These families formed together the governing or legislating body, out of which the shires and boroughs chose their representatives: they, in the mixed Constitution, were the aristocratic element restraining the excesses of the Crown and the multitude, and in their turn restrained, or stimulated, by both. Some of these families were titled: the majority were not. They were not a closed caste, because commerce and the law, the East Indies and the West Indies, were constantly adding to their numbers. They made up the two Houses of Parliament, which was not yet

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thought of as being in the main a legislative body. Its function was to control the Executive, to vote supplies and see that they were prudently spent, to decide the issues of peace and war, and call ministers to account. Indeed, so long as a man paid his taxes and his debts, and committed no crime, he might pass his life without once coming into contact with the Government or the law: and the departments of state resembled rather the household of a great nobleman than anything which in France or Germany would have been called an administration. Once a session, a battle royal lasting eight or nine nights; and the rest of the time, election committees, turnpike committees, or inclosure committees, in the most entertaining society that England could bring together, such was Parliament before the Reform; and the change after the Reform was neither so rapid nor so complete as Radicals might have hoped.

Still, change there was, and it is visible already in the last Parliament of William IV and the first Parliament of Victoria. The new Poor Law may, on its merits, as a piece of drastic surgery designed to cut the canker of pauperism out of the body politic, be diversely judged. But it was the first Act of Parliament which did, directly and intimately, concern the people at large. And it confronted a bewildered Parliament and Cabinet with a new instrument of government—the public investigation. Inquire—report—legislate—administer—amend: and make your organ of administration your instrument of inquiry. The Poor Law Commission—and its inspectors—are the nucleus of the modern Civil Service: the investigations which they opened are the source, and the model, of those libraries of reports and statistical reviews on which all our administra-

tion, and most of our legislation, is founded. Never had any country submitted itself to such ruthless and searching examination. The contemporary who described the evolution of parliamentary speaking as a passage from Humbug to Humdrum was not wide of the mark. By 1840, one might say, the first qualification of a Member of Parliament was that he should know his facts. In 1820 there had been hardly any facts to know.

Thus Parliament was enabled to become a legislature, just when circumstances were compelling it to be a legislature. We may wish that it had taken in hand a generation sooner the problems—health, housing, labour, education—which the enormous development of industry and the growth of the great towns had created. But it is barely possible to imagine the old legislative families, Whig or Tory, setting their minds to a task, the nature and magnitude of which they could not have comprehended. Not until the new Benthamite formula had been absorbed into the Constitution, and an administration brought into being to give it effect, was it possible for Parliament to take in hand the government of a great commercial and industrial community—a community, for example, where the economic and social relationships of a whole countryside might in a few months be changed by a new invention or a new railway. By Whig and Tory doctrine alike, Parliament was meant to represent, not public opinion in an indistinguishable mass, not even the several opinions of the constituencies, but rather the chief interests, the natural estates of the realm: land, commerce, industry, with an acknowledged leaning towards the land as the stablest element in the social structure. With the enfranchisement of the middle

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classes the balance was beginning to tilt. They still preferred to be represented in Parliament by a gentleman, but a gentleman who could cut a figure in a debate on Banking Bills and Railway Bills; who knew his tables of imports and exports, and where the incidence of a new tax would fall; who, above all, could hold his own and defend the interests of his constituents on the great issue of Protection or Free Trade.

Thus the ground of selection, which had once been birth with capacity taken for granted, shifted to capacity, though with some regard still to birth. But of parliamentary capacity no constituency can judge, and so some kind of pre-selection is inevitable. As early as the forties we hear of a *caucus*, a meeting of the county gentlemen to settle who shall be put forward. The boroughs were more independent, and the party candidates might find themselves confronted by a local manufacturer standing 'at the request of a numerous and respectable body of citizens'. But the growth of the electorate required a stricter party management; the independent member faded away; the pre-selection tended to pass into the hands of the party organization, local and central: and how much influence either of them may in any case exercise depends on circumstances and personality and a host of imponderables. There are seats which are as much in the gift of a Trade Union as Calne was in the gift of Lord Lansdowne, or Chester of the Grosvenors, in the days before Reform.

V

Freedom of speech in Parliament means that a member cannot be called to account, for words

spoken in the House, by anyone outside the House. First claimed in the fifteenth century, this privilege was finally established in the seventeenth, and is solemnly acknowledged by the Crown, when, at the opening of a new Parliament, the Speaker is presented for the royal acceptance. To abuse it is a mark of bad parliamentary breeding: and the privilege extends to any faithful report of a debate in the Press. It was not always so. In 1837 the Inspectors of Prisons, investigating Newgate, reported that they found the inmates solacing their leisure by the perusal of an obscene book with plates issued by one Stockdale; the report was laid and in the usual course ordered to be printed by Hansard. Stockdale, conceiving his character as a publisher and a man to be at stake, took proceedings against Hansard for libel, and Denman, Lord Chief Justice, ruled that if a man libelled another in his business it was no defence to say that a third party had bidden him to do it, even though that party was the House of Commons. Stockdale bought another copy of the peccant report, renewed his proceedings, and was awarded £100 damages. Having discovered this easy way of adding to his income there seemed no reason why Stockdale should not pursue it so long as copies of the report were to be purchased, and for nearly four years the public was entertained by the spectacle of the Commons spasmodically vindicating their privileges by committing an obscure printer to gaol, along with his clerk and his attorney, for conduct which Queen's Bench had pronounced to be lawful.

Freedom of speech is a very simple conception. The procedure of Parliament is exceedingly intricate, and to the observer often bewildering, having been designed and developed to serve another pur-

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pose as well—to make a programme and carry it through. All legislation of any consequence is now government legislation. In principle, it must conform with the doctrines of the party in power: in detail, it is worked out, and thrown into legislative form, by the Civil Service. Once drafted and presented, time must be found for it, in a House which has also to control the administration, sanction all taxation, direct all expenditure, and give a hearing to any complaint of wrong-doing by the king's servants or by Parliament itself. And if any one detail of parliamentary procedure is traced to its origin it will nearly always be found to have been designed to this end—to give Parliament whatever opportunities it needs for these four purposes: redress of grievances—this came first: control of the national finances; control of the executive; and legislation—but opportunities limited by one consideration, that Parliament is not only a debating body but a deciding body. Therefore everything that is laid before it must be laid in the form of a question, and the ultimate rule of procedure is the one which says: 'We have talked long enough: let us say Aye or No, and go on to the next business before us.'

From all which it follows that the individual member is the centre of a threefold relation—with his party, with the House, and with his constituents. To his party, Parliament is primarily a sovereign assembly, designed to get things done; to carry out the party programme. In this aspect he is a man under discipline, who may be characterized either as a staunch party supporter or as a voting machine worked by the whips. From the outside either description, or both together, may be taken as true. And it is from the outside that the great mass of the

public views its representatives in Parliament. But shift the point of observation from outside to inside and the observer realizes what the common elector, whose interest in Parliament is an intermittent excitement rather than a steady concern, finds it not easy to understand, that Parliament is something more than the meeting-ground of two opposing parties; that it has a being, an intelligence, and a temperament of its own; all of which arise from the consciousness of its double part. It resents obstruction—because it is a legislature working to a programme. Equally it resents encroachment by the Government—because it is a debating assembly where all arguments must be heard. And finally, in his relations with his constituents, the member is discharging a parliamentary function even more primitive than legislation or debate—the presentation of grievances needing redress. They may be dealt with by correspondence with the Minister concerned. They may be raised at Question Time. And if Question Time leaves the member dissatisfied he has his remedy on the Adjournment. Here the Commons are exercising—it may be for a pensionless widow or a West African soldier who has been unduly caned—one of their most ancient and essential privileges. They are not confined to the business laid before them by the Crown and its Ministers. They can debate what they like, and they need not break up till they have debated it. These nightly talks at the end of business are among the most lively passages in the parliamentary record. They are not often reported in the papers. But a collection of discussions on the adjournment would show the House of Commons in its most friendly, one might almost say, its most paternal mood. The grievance is dis-

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charged, the Minister shows there is nothing in it—if there is, he will do his best; and Private Oggwinski can pride himself all his life long that his canings were once a matter of debate in the Imperial Parliament.

The Member who does his duty by his party, his constituents, and the House, is, in fact, a heavily burdened unit in a heavily burdened assembly. It might be no difficult matter, by the provision of office and secretarial facilities, to make life easier for him. On the other hand, much of the weight of legislation has already slipped from the shoulders of the House into the silent hands of the Civil Service; it seems probable that what might be called the outlying provinces of debate will be transferred from the floor to committee rooms upstairs, and that the House of Commons as such will revert to, or rather towards, its earlier functions, determining policy, voting supplies, controlling the executive, and presenting grievances.

VI

Burke reckoned the political population, the people, at about 400,000 or, say, one householder in seven. So many, he thought, were qualified by education and experience to make a good choice of representation, and as Macaulay said, 'the very principle of all representative government is, that men who do not judge well of public affairs may be quite competent to choose others who will judge better'. The Reform Bill, which the young Whig is here defending, did in effect endorse Burke's calculation. The electoral body from 1832 to the next extension in 1867 comprised approximately one house-

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holder in six. Thus the electorate was a small and privileged class, coinciding to some degree of closeness with the literate class, politically informed and acting on behalf of the politically ignorant. Indeed, one of the arguments most commonly urged against the ballot was that the outer ring had a right to know how the inner ring were voting on their behalf.

Before the Reform, it was to the counties and the open boroughs like Southwark and Westminster that political calculators looked for the trend of public opinion. Reform left the counties very much as they were, and greatly increased the power of the boroughs. But, in the boroughs, association for all purposes was easier, and the Englishman of the nineteenth century, a stiff individualist in his attitude to the State, was the most gregarious of mankind in his relations with his fellows. The Englishman without a club, a union, a society, or a church to belong to, was a rare thing to encounter; and it was in these unofficial, natural groups that political opinion was mainly formed. The coming together of such groups creates a movement. So the Wesleyan Church had come into being, and the Methodist example had a powerful influence on the formation of the trade unions. The secret society, especially if it was caught corresponding with other secret societies, was a natural object of suspicion to government. But to the innocent society, carrying out its objects and practising its ritual in the light of day, the Friendly Society cultivating self-help and thrift, good fellowship and good cheer, the law was indulgent. Between the two, the trade unions floated in somewhat uneasy equipoise. The law hardly knew what to make of bodies which in one light were benefit clubs, in another conspiracies in restraint of trade. The Act of

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1875 which finally legitimated the trade unions went some way to revive the conception of Parliament as an assembly of estates, the land, the clergy, the merchants, the manufacturers, and now, the estate of labour.

But about the time when this new estate was beginning—still faintly and remotely—to make itself felt as such, we become aware that the ground on which the old estates had stood since the Revolution of 1689 is cracking or shifting beneath them. It was their common faith that the constitution contained within itself the necessary means of adjustment and improvement; that its capacity for self-adaptation was unlimited. And they could give reasons for their belief. As each new interest had risen into importance the constitution had modified itself accordingly; the king's peace had never been broken. And each modification, on the whole, had tended to give more and more weight to the findings of public opinion. It had found for Parliamentary Reform in 1830; for Free Trade; for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church: for compulsory schooling; for the admission of dissenters to the universities; for the extension of the franchise, downwards and outwards, until manhood suffrage was in sight. So considered, the trend of public opinion may be called Liberal, moving always towards the abatement of political or social privilege; with a left or Radical wing pressing forwards to a direct attack on the Church and the House of Lords, and a right wing, of a more Whiggish cast, by no means ready to replace the ancient order of government by a régime of popular orators and non-conformist manufacturers, without tradition and without experience.

But side by side with this liberal movement in the

purely political field, we are aware that, in the mixed or border area of politics and economics, a forgotten force is at work with a steadily increasing power; a feeling, rather than a reasoned conviction, that the State is something other than a tax-collecting policeman charged with the removal of obstruction to free enterprise: that the abatement of privilege has left untouched the privilege of the man who has something to fall back on over the man who has not, and that government ought to do something about it. This sentiment has never lacked exponents even in the legislative classes—in Southey and the Quarterly Reviewers: in Oastler and Sadler and the leaders of the Ten Hour movement: among the humanitarians headed by Lord Shaftesbury, the romantics who gathered round Disraeli and called themselves Young England, and the Christian Socialists for whom Kingsley spoke. And this mode of opinion could count its victories, too, in the great Factory Acts of 1847 and 1877; in the creation of the School Boards; in a host of minor measures for the health and comfort of the people; in the activity of inspectors; the new energy of progressive municipalities. The régime of *laissez-faire* had in fact been very brief: the pressure of the State on the individual, hardly felt in 1830, was beginning to be sensible in 1870, and to the factory-owner, the mine-owner, the ship-owner who sent a vessel to sea ill-found, or the parent who did not send his children to school at all, by 1880 it was beginning to be uncomfortable, if not yet menacing.

Changes of opinion in England have, or used to have, the massive slowness of a geological process; and it would not be easy to say by what degrees the conception of the State as an authority to be watched, controlled, and in the last resort resisted, gave way

to the conception of the State as a power to be employed for the general good. It was by such a change that the monarchy of Charles II became the monarchy of George I, the general good being taken here to mean the Protestant succession, the ascendancy of the Whig aristocracy, Habeas Corpus, an uncensored Press, and the Toleration Act. A simple conception, doubtless, but one which sufficed the needs of an island without territorial ambitions on the Continent and rarely exposed to any serious danger of invasion: an island, too, with a social structure not less simple. 'A nobleman, a gentleman, a yeoman—that is a good Interest.' So Cromwell had said, and the good Interest kept the pyramid on its base. A landlord, a tenant, a labourer; a merchant, an apprentice, a porter: a mill-owner, a foreman, a manufacturer, as the word went in the early nineteenth century. But the pattern, the tradition, had never had occasion to find a place for town-government on any greater scale than the market town or the provincial capital. Often enough such places were seats of sound and serious culture. But they were not places of sound or serious government; and one might search long in English literature to find a mayor or alderman who is not a butt for the author's humour, a corporation which is not harmlessly idle or mischievously corrupt. A certain conflict between the landed interest wanting high rents and a manufacturing interest wanting free imports was inevitable. In 1846, with the repeal of the Corn Laws, it was settled—and the land took no harm. What remained, though it never came so clearly to the surface, was the conflict between the parties of good government and no government at all. And the arena was the town.

The town, we may say, was the great and almost insoluble problem of Victorian statesmanship. Take London. The inner square mile known as the City was governed, more or less, by the lord mayor and corporation. But by 1850 it had almost ceased to be a place of residence, and the imperial capital, which sprawled over four counties, had long absorbed the twin City of Westminster and was swallowing up the villages by which it had once been encircled. What with parish councils and vestries—Karl Marx was a vestryman of St. Pancras—special commissions for lighting, draining, and paving, grand juries and petty sessions, it was reckoned that ten thousand individuals had a finger in the administration of the metropolis, and the results are recorded for all time in *Oliver Twist* and *Bleak House*. But the same uncontrolled expansion had created the Black Country, the West Riding, South Lancashire, South Wales, and the north-east of England.

If, now, we endeavour to break up the public opinion of the age, in face of this problem, into its elements, to recover, as it were, the debate that went on in those natural groupings of which I have spoken, we can discern six main elements or trends. First is a direct, physical recoil, a revolt of the senses, against the conditions in which great multitudes were living; a recoil which at times sharpened into keen alarm at what might happen if Nature had her revenge, if cholera broke out, or the underworld broke loose. Not far apart on one side is the aesthetic trend, a repulsion from the ugliness of modern life; on the other, the religious, the desire to lead the multitude into a way of life more becoming Christian men and women; or, if religion did not enter, the pure humanitarian impulse to do good, to save

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the multitude from itself. Finally, we must reckon with a new force, the scientific craving to understand, to analyse, to trace effects to their causes, and this in its turn is closely linked with the administrative need to set things—and people too, perhaps—in order.

And here the debate grows hot. From the other side we hear the loud assertion that the Englishman's home is his castle, and, if his home, then his mill, his factory, his shop as well. There he will brook no interference, and it is not very easy to question his belief that he knows better how to manage it than anyone can tell him. It is rather when we leave the factory and go out into the streets where the operatives live that doubts arise and refuse to be suppressed. Macaulay put the opposing cases with his usual trenchancy when he brought the individualist on to the stage arguing in this wise: 'Your doctrine is that everybody should be at liberty to buy cheap and sell dear'—a phrase, almost become proverbial, from the Merchants' Petition on Free Trade in 1820—'Why then may I not run up a house as cheap as I can and let my rooms as dear as I can? You do not like houses without drains? Then do not take one of mine. You think my bedrooms filthy? Nobody forces you to sleep in them.' And he answers him thus: 'It concerns the commonwealth that the great body of the people should not live in a way which makes life wretched and short, which enfeebles the body and pollutes the mind.' It is a remarkable, but instructive, coincidence that while he was speaking the Bill repealing the Corn Laws was before the Lords. It was in these new circumstances and under these new conditions that the issue—good government or no government—began to clarify.

VII

It is one of the commonest experiences of history that what to a later age seems an issue of almost obtrusive plainness was to contemporaries masked by controversy over an entirely different—it may seem an entirely irrelevant—matter. It is difficult for a generation like ours, which probably does not think of Ireland once in a month, to recover the atmosphere, the sentiment, of a generation which thought of nothing else. Ever since the Union of 1800 Ireland had been the great exasperator of English politics: from 1880 it was the great preoccupation. Here within a few hours' crossing was a community which, abundantly and even excessively represented in Parliament, was on its own soil a standing challenge to the doctrine: one king, one people, and the king's peace over all. But let us, in imagination, set aside or strike out the old problem of Ireland, the new problem of Empire: let us forget Gordon and Afghanistan, Parnell and Lord Frederick Cavendish, the bombardment of Alexandria and the defeat of Majuba Hill, and narrow our view to England in the eighties. What we observe is, first, that the ancient ascendancy of the Landed Interest is rapidly passing away. It had fought hard, but the stars in their courses were too strong for it; and a social order which had withstood the shock of Parliamentary Reform and Free Trade succumbed to the wheat of the American prairies. But on a more exact view we must allow that this order had become something of a make-believe, and that it rested not so much on the supposed stability of landed wealth as on the past profits of the land, now stored away in urban

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property and industrial investments at home and abroad. Wealth, visible and traditional; wealth associated with famous names and famous houses, with generations of public service and authority, was yielding to wealth invisible and new, with no historic roots, no memories, and few responsibilities.

In the second place, the optimism, the social confidence, of the mid-Victorian years had been chilled. To the economist of 1830 the great and growing cloud on the horizon was over-population. For a while it seemed to have been dispelled. A limitless demand for English manufactures promised work for all, and if work failed, then North America and Australia held out a limitless prospect to the emigrant. But again, on a closer view, the labouring class is seen to be stratified. There are the skilled workmen of the great industries, coal, cotton, wool, shipbuilding, engineering. There is also a great mass of unskilled urban labour. And between the two, the rural worker, highly skilled in his own craft but not adaptable to any other, steadily drifts from ill-paid labour in the country to precarious labour in the town.

Always to that word we return—'An age of great cities needs strong government.' And the conception of strong government had to be lodged in those great cities, there to prove its virtue by results, before the inherited dislike of governmental interference could be abated to a reasonable acceptance of reform not otherwise to be accomplished than by the action of the law. Self-help and the sporting chance had done wonders, doubtless. But they had not touched that lowest stratum, that inner core, of those who could not help themselves and might truthfully declare that they had never had a chance.

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Thus it came about that the immediate reaction to the warning of the eighties was an increased vigour of local administration, radiating, we may say, from Birmingham; in the years when Parliament and public opinion at large were more deeply engrossed in foreign and imperial affairs. It is as significant as it is remarkable that the Bill creating the county councils, drafted by a Radical and carried by a Conservative minister, went through both Houses without a division. We may truly suppose that Parliament hardly knew what it was doing. What it had done was to create an instrument for redistributing the wealth of the nation. These authorities, permitted, and indeed encouraged, to spend liberally on the welfare of their people, could only finance themselves by local taxation. As their range of activity enlarged, it was inevitable that they should call more and more loudly for help from the Exchequer; for grants-in-aid to be given on proof of necessity, efficiency, and good management. To what lengths the process might be carried few politicians of the eighties could have conceived. But at a much deeper level doubts were stirring, doubts directed, we may say, not to the mechanism of the State and its functioning, but to the common assumptions on which the political fabric was reared. Let it be granted, first, that a man's duty is to make provision for himself and his family, and second, that there are many desirable and necessary things which by his own efforts he cannot provide. Here, then, he can properly call on his neighbours for help. And that help may come in any of three ways—by voluntary association, by charity, or by a levy on his richer neighbours. But suppose all these have been tried—the friendly society, the charitable society, the poor rate—and

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still there are many thousands of families living below the standard which a civilized nation can countenance? Then the balance can only be made good—within the existing order—by a national levy, by taxation. But the proceeds of that taxation must be applied, in a regular and impartial manner, by a trained, experienced administration. In other words, the social welfare, the domestic welfare, even the personal welfare, of the people imported a measure of interference and control by Government incompatible with those assumptions of independence and self-help by which, on the whole, English society had directed itself hitherto.

VIII

Thus we reached a compromise to which the old estates, reluctantly or willingly, conformed and to which the new estate of labour took no vehement exception. The production of wealth was subject to little control, but the distribution of wealth was a matter of public concern, the chief agency of distribution now being the local authority acting under the eye of the central administration. In popular usage, Socialism commonly meant a liberal application of money raised by local taxation for the benefit of the poor at the expense of the middle classes. But an interpretation, at once more scientific and more stimulating, was beginning to find its way downwards from thinkers who had come under the influence of a foreign doctrine. The new creed was not confined to criticism of the institutions in which the existing order expressed itself. It assailed the order itself, and showed therewithal a somewhat remarkable indifference to the institutions of the new order.

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To the question—What needs to be done? It was voluble in reply. To the question—How shall we do it? What bills shall we lay? it answered uncertainly, if at all. Only after its exponents had obtained some experience of authority and administration did Socialism begin to reveal itself as a practicable, a parliamentary alternative to the traditional policies of the great historic parties.

Those parties had come into being on a purely domestic issue—whether the prerogatives of the Crown, determined by law, should be exercised by the Crown in the ancient manner, or transferred to the leaders of the party which had a majority in the House of Commons. As so often happens, a later generation found no difficulty in solving a problem which was too abstruse for the political intelligence of their grandfathers. But, the problem once solved by the invention of Cabinet Government, party policy was little more than the playing of temperamental variations on an agreed theme, the theme being acceptable to almost all, and every variation to some substantial element in the country. Did you dislike factory-owners and new money worse than landowners and old money? Then you were a Conservative and voted for a ten-hour day in the cotton mills. Did you dislike landowners more than factory-owners? Then you were a Liberal and voted against the game laws. And the new estate of labour, confident that it could make its way by the tried methods of collective bargaining and the strike, was not very strongly disposed to criticize a political order which enlarged its range of influence without in any way restricting its range of action.

But the economic order, while it had enormously increased the wealth, and greatly improved the wel-

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fare of the nation, had at one point failed. It had not abolished unemployment, and, therewith, unmerited poverty and the privilege which the man with something to fall back on has over the man with nothing. In other words, the historic parties had done their work. They had between them maintained the stability of the political fabric through changes which might have been convulsive, with such amendments as public opinion demanded or approved. And that opinion was, on the whole, the opinion of those in whom the doctrines of self-help and personal liberty were ingrained. But if the rewards of self-help were to be progressively confiscated for the benefit of the less fortunate: if individual liberty was to be increasingly restricted by authority, central or local, by laws and by-laws, was there not a danger that, as the incentive lessened, the springs of energy might fail? On the whole it seemed that to be under-regulated suited the English temper better than to be over-regulated: to be under-cared for better than to be over-cared for. How much can you take from people—whether of money or authority—and leave them working their hardest for the rest? How much can you do for people and be sure that what remains they will do for themselves? On what diagonal we might have moved if the twentieth century had been as peaceful as the nineteenth, or its conflicts no more destructive, it is impossible to say, though fascinating to guess. But fate did not mean that the experiment should be tried. Two great wars habituated the people of England to a rigorous discipline and an unlimited expenditure directed to a common aim. In these circumstances it was inevitable, that they should at least speculate on the possibility that discipline and the direction of wealth might solve the

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problem which on the assumption of the nineteenth century had proved itself insoluble, the problem of employment.

But these same wars had other consequences, the scope and outcome of which the future will reveal. To what degree could the English character be read as a function, or exponent, of its material setting—of wealth, ease, security, and power? One by one they have fallen away from us, and perhaps no great nation, undefeated in war, has ever fallen from high to low so swiftly. Wealth may replace itself, and wealth fairly distributed brings ease. But for generations England had sustained a part in the world beyond her resources, had not those resources been magnified by insular security and sea power. And, having lasted just long enough to save her from destruction in the latest war, they, too, have gone.

By the convergence of these processes, internal and external, a situation has been created for which neither precedent nor parallel is to be discerned. Hitherto we had always employed the relief and security of victory to master some domestic problem. After the wars of Elizabeth the issue of Crown and Parliament, long latent, emerged to demand solution. The eighteenth century saw the development of Cabinet Government from an expedient to a settled constitutional principle. After Waterloo we were for the most part occupied with problems raised by the conversion of an agricultural into an industrial state. So, on a sanguine view, it might be thought that we are back at the corresponding point on the historic spiral. And so we are: but with the difference that we can neither feed ourselves, nor, without foreign assistance, buy our food, nor can we even guess how long this period of impoverished de-

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pendence will be drawn out. Since the Norman Conquest there has been no such solution of continuity in our history.

If the analogy be thought extravagant, let this be considered. The Conquest worked a revolution by the transference of land, and the consequent change of status in all ranks of society. It imposed on the traditional relationships of the people a firm and clearly articulated law. But it left untouched, it even invigorated, the ancient conception of the king, the council, and the shires, with the king's peace over all; out of which in due time grew the doctrine that the law is settled by the joint agreement of the shires, the council, and the king. Now, it is certainly remarkable that though isolated voices have sometimes been heard calling for the supersession of Parliament, and government by administrative decree, yet no party of any substance has proposed to alter the constitution of the House of Commons, to change the mode of election, to modify or vary its powers or its relations with the executive.

Thus one strand of continuity has been preserved in the general severing of the social tradition, and, if speculation may be allowed, the shape of the future will be determined by the capacity of parliamentary institutions to direct the changes which the social fabric must necessarily undergo. Two things alone can be with any confidence predicted. One is, a further development and extension of delegated legislation. The other, considerable changes in the financial institution of a State which will in future be a great industrial and mercantile corporation.

The making of laws may be devolved either on government departments directly dependent on the Cabinet and therefore invigilated more or less closely

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by Parliament, or on local authorities. The chief difference is that in one case the law—call it regulation or order—is of general application; in the other, as its name by-law signifies, it is operative only within a stated area or—as with the by-laws of railway companies—over a certain class of transactions. In imparting these powers Parliament can, at its entire and unrestricted pleasure, enact that the exercise of them shall, or shall not, be subject to review by the courts of law. The tendency unquestionably of late years has been all one way—to withdraw government regulations from the scrutiny of the courts, and so to give them the full effect of law. No such process is yet observable removing local legislation from the jurisdiction of the King's Bench. Yet it might be argued that the counties and boroughs, already enjoying unlimited powers of taxation, and chosen by popular vote, have a better claim to such autonomy than government departments, operating under the somewhat remote and occasional control of Parliament; and the case will be strengthened if, as many propose, the existing authorities are thrown together in larger unities, called regions. We may not have a demand for Home Rule in Northumbria or the East Midlands. We may very likely hear a claim for Regional Rights; for a legal delimitation of the powers of Parliament and the regional assembly; for an infusion of Federalism into the constitution.

On the other hand, by the development of the advisory council or the consultative committee, public and professional opinion can be brought directly to bear on the legislative activities of a department. Withdrawn from such influences and contacts, it tends to become a legislature without a

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constituency, and therefore, in Cromwell's phrase, to think less of what people want and more of what is good for them. Within one generation, and twice accelerated by the necessities of war, these powers have grown prodigiously. But in war they were exercised for two clearly defined and acceptable purposes—the concentration of the national strength and the even distribution of national resources, under conditions approximating to beleaguering, conditions which have been only in part modified or mitigated by the raising of the siege and the return of peace. What is of greater significance, what really is the determining element in our condition to-day, is that whereas, during the war, those resources were in large part borrowed, or given, henceforth they will have to be earned, and the earning will, very largely, be conducted, regulated and controlled by government departments, that is, by the Cabinet, responsible to a Parliament designed for very different purposes. That is where we stand to-day. But where we are going, no man can even guess.

THE LIBERAL MIND IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND ¹

BEFORE we think for a while about the liberal mind in Victorian England, may I remind you of something which we are all apt to forget—I mean that the Victorian age, as we call it, is the insular phase of a movement common to the whole of western Europe and its offshoots beyond the seas. When we lift our eyes from our own country, our own ancestors, and look across the Channel, or across the Atlantic, constantly we find that ways and habits, fashions and prejudices, doctrines, ideas, and even phrases which we think of as typically Victorian, are really part of a general European pattern. Let me give you one instance. You know how hotly our Victorian moralists and satirists inveigh against the shortcomings of women's education, the silliness and shallowness of the boarding school, the time wasted on trivial accomplishments. Which of them wrote this passage?

She had been brought up in one of the most exclusive establishments, where three objects are regarded as of the highest importance. First comes French, then the piano, that she shall be able to amuse and soothe her husband, and lastly a thorough acquaintance with the principles of household economy in its highest and most aesthetic sense, including the art of knitting purses.

Is it Thackeray, or Dickens, or George Eliot? It is none of them: it is not English. It comes from

¹ A broadcast delivered on May 5, 1948, and reprinted the same year in *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians* (Sylvan Press)

Gogol's *Dead Souls*, I suppose the most intensely Russian book ever written. But written in an age when thoughtful men and women were deeply concerned with this question of women's education, and so you find Gogol at the far end of Europe writing a sentence which you would not be surprised to meet in any English book of the time, while if you searched I have no doubt you would encounter the same ideas, in much the same language, in Swedish books and Portuguese books. It is part of what I have called the European pattern: just as Gothic architecture was part of the pattern before the Renaissance, and classical architecture after the Renaissance. But as we travel about Europe we soon learn to distinguish French Gothic from English Gothic, or Spanish baroque from German baroque. They are the same, but with a difference, and you might perhaps say that the difference is more interesting than the identity, and the identity is more significant than the difference. That I think is the right way to look at any of these great European patterns, and I shall try to show what I believe to be the fundamental unity of liberal thought in the Victorian age, and to set off against it the English variations from the common type, and the English contributions to the common stock.

Take that word 'liberal'. In England, before the French Revolution, it meant magnanimous, open-handed, open-hearted, and—just note the change which is setting in—open-minded, free from prejudice, ready to judge things on their merits. What things? Everything! The State and its institutions, the Church and its doctrines. You see there is something rather explosive in that word 'liberal', because if the State is oppressive or the Church corrupt, if

the laws of the State are unreasonable or the teaching of the Church incredible, then your liberal man will tend to be a revolutionary and a free thinker. So you may understand why Sir Robert Peel called 'liberal' an odious word, and why some people in speaking of Liberals were careful to call them by their French name, *les libéraux*, or their Spanish name, *los liberales*, just to show that Liberalism was one of those hateful foreign doctrines, immoral and irreligious, which had brought about one Revolution in France, and might bring about another, perhaps in England.

The liberals were in fact the disappointed heirs of the Revolution, and when after Waterloo the dynasts returned to their thrones, the liberals in Spain and Italy and in France were the opposition, the resistance, ready to overthrow the restored order of things whenever occasion offered, and if necessary by force. In this sense Byron and Shelley were liberals—in Italy. But in England the word lost its subversive sense, partly because we had a much more expressive word of our own, 'radical', and partly because with our long political experience and education, our reformers knew very much better than the foreign *liberales* what they wanted and how to get it. So in England, the wide-sweeping liberalism of Europe was canalized, so to speak, towards one object, the reform of the House of Commons and an extended franchise. And when that was achieved, and the decision loyally accepted by the Tory opposition, liberalism in England became respectable. If a man called himself a Liberal in 1837, no one imagined that he wanted to dethrone the Queen or plunder the bishops. He was certainly a loyal subject and very likely a devout churchman—as Mr. Gladstone was, and Mr. Gladstone, destined as we know

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to become the greatest liberal of all time, never for a moment abated his reverence for monarchy, aristocracy, and the Church.

You see how difficult it is to pin the liberal mind within the four corners of a definition. But I think we can get a little nearer if we consider this. Before the French Revolution, even intelligent men seem to have taken it for granted that the world would always be very much what it was. It would improve, no doubt: civilization would spread to the Pacific Islands, superstition would make way for reason, science would be cultivated in Siberia and the Far West of America, and the nations, if they were wise, would live in harmony under free constitutions like that which had made England so great and so happy. That was about as far as the most far-sighted man could look. Then came the French Revolution, which showed that institutions which had lasted for generations might be destroyed in a few months, and that Europe, so far from being stable, could, if revolutionary principles prevailed, be turned upside down. The nations might, indeed, defend themselves against the French armies. But could they defend themselves against French ideas?

But that is only one half of the story, because even if there had been no French Revolution, a great change in men's ways of thinking would have come about, simply from the development of science, or, as they called it, natural philosophy. And to that there was no end in sight. If a train could run 30 miles in an hour, why not 300? If a Lancashire mill could turn out 10,000 yards a day, why not 100,000? If science could master smallpox, why not all other diseases? And so in place of the old notion of society as something static and gently improving itself, you

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get the new notion of society as something dynamic and constantly transforming itself, by processes to which no limit could be assigned.

Bring these two ideas together, the French idea of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, and the English idea of progress by means of science. What shape will the compound take? Something like this, I think: 'Frame your institutions so as to give the utmost scope to these new pioneers and this new power. Throw down everything that may obstruct the progress of industry and the march of mind. And that means, bring your laws and your administration by means of free discussion into accordance with the findings of public opinion. Then there will be no subversion, no revolution, because the people will be on the side of the law; the Government will govern with their consent: and the process of improvement will be working everywhere and all the time, because political freedom and material progress are two sides of the same medal.' That, one may say, is standard mid-Victorian liberalism. But here we must remember that in England public opinion and discussion were bound by conventions—moral, social, and religious—stricter, I should reckon, than in any European country enjoying the same amount of political freedom. The liberal, we remember, is the man who claims the right to judge everything on its merits, without prejudice or dogma, and English society was, we may say, dogmatic all through. A man did take a risk if he discussed too freely certain religious questions or certain social questions, if he criticized our divorce laws or asked whether God really commanded the Israelites to put the people of Canaan to the sword. Mill's *Essay on Liberty* is really a plea for freer discussion of serious matters, and no

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wonder thoughtful men looked wistfully to the Continent—to the universities of France and Germany and Holland where you could believe what you liked and the only question was 'What reason have you for believing it?' And the breaking down of these conventions in England was one of the greatest services, and most lasting, of the liberal mind.

But whether here or abroad the central conception of liberalism is political, it means government in accordance with opinion elicited by discussion, and so it was possible to divide the nations of the world quite simply into the liberal, who were our natural friends, and the despotic, who were our natural enemies. 'There are two parties in Europe', Palmerston once said; 'one party considers nations to be the property of their governors, the other holds that governments are established for the good of the many, and that is the principle on which our government was founded in 1688'. And the good of the many, means what they think good for themselves, not what someone else, however wise and benevolent, thinks good for them. Hence comes the liberal watchword 'Self-government is better than good government'. But notice once more how the concept has to be adapted to fit our island circumstances, and our long tradition of government by a parliamentary aristocracy which the Continent did not possess. What, for example, is the essence of Gladstonian liberalism? I should say, a detestation of all authority, from empires to trade unions, not omitting parliaments, which does not rest on the consent of the governed, habitual or expressed, and note that word 'habitual' because it is the dividing line between the Liberal and the Radical, between, say, Gladstone and Bright. The liberal makes allowance for the

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fact that the people still respect, admire, and trust the old governing class, so long as it acknowledges the power and final judgment of public opinion. And so in the mid-Victorian years, we settled down into an easy genial compromise between progress and tradition—years when a candidate, being asked about his political opinions might reply, and very often did reply ‘Sir, I am a liberal Conservative’, which meant ‘our old institutions have served us well, and I see no reason to change them. But I have an open mind and if there are any improvements which public opinion demands then I am ready to consider them.’

What are the improvements which public opinion demands, and the liberal will support? I think you can bring them under one head and say, the removal of any unfair advantage, social, political, national, or racial. To introduce competitive examination for the Civil Service; to disestablish the Irish Church; to abolish the purchase of commissions in the Army; to admit dissenters to the Universities and Jews to Parliament; to give self-government to the South African States after the Peace of 1902—these are all typically liberal measures. But when you come to economic inequality, to the advantage which the rich man has over the poor man, then you feel that liberalism, political liberalism, is coming to the end of its programme: it is passing the torch on to a new competitor in the race for power. Socialism in late-Victorian England has not begun to make itself felt. But it has begun to make itself heard. And what it is saying is that neither party, Liberal nor Conservative, has any answer to the great problem of modern life—poverty in the midst of plenty. You tell us, these new-comers say, that our old institu-

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tions have served us well. We reply that they are serving us very ill to-day. You tell us that you are prepared to improve them. We reply that your Education Acts, your Trade Union Acts, your County Council Acts, none of them goes to the root of things. We do not want improvements. We want change.

And now you see the tide turning. Throughout the Victorian age, our political ideas were ascendant: it was to England that all political reformers looked, while from foreigners we had nothing to learn. But when we come to social and economic ideas, the influence is the other way. It is we who look abroad, to America, to Germany, to France. And as European liberalism evolves towards socialism, so does ours. But always with that difference, which we have noticed so often, when European ideas have to be fitted into the island framework.

But will the framework hold them, or will the explosive elements in the new doctrines shatter it to pieces? Are socialism and parliamentary methods really compatible? Are you in your heart convinced that self-government *is* better than good government? Can you make the welfare of the people your aim without sacrificing their liberty? Can you bring progress under control and not take the heart out of the pioneer, so damping initiative and responsibility together? It is in questions like this that you hear late-Victorian liberalism—the liberalism of men who had grown up under the influence of Mill and Morley—taking its stand, measuring itself against the new ideas: questions which they have left us to answer.

THE HAPPY FAMILY¹

SUPPOSE you fell asleep to-night and woke up in 1860. What is the first thing you would notice? It depends, of course, where you woke up. But if it was in a town there can be little doubt as to the answer. The noise—the noise of the traffic, of wheels on granite setts. There is a patch of road near King's Cross which gives you some idea of what a Victorian street sounded like. But only half an idea, because in 1860 all the wheels had iron tyres. And when you had got used to this noise, the next thing you would observe would be the murkiness of the atmosphere everywhere, and, as you went on your way, every now and then a sudden puff of tainted air. Compared with the London of 1860, London to-day is sweet, clean, and quiet. Hoarse voices, shouting to make themselves heard; smudgy faces; eyes bleared with fog; bare-footed ragamuffins dashing in and out under the horses' heads; and a traffic jam at every corner; that is what you would encounter. That is what Tennyson had in mind when he spoke of 'streaming London's central roar'. And if you woke up in one of the great industrial regions, on Tyne-side or in the Black Country, you would find things so much worse, so much dirtier, fouler, and noisier, that you might ask to be put to sleep again and carried back to 1946.

But suppose you decide to face it, and see for yourself what England in 1860 is really like, how

¹ A broadcast delivered on May 20, 1946

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people live and what they think about it all. We shall need a guide, a typical average man. But where are you to find him in a country which shows such endless variety of life and such violent contrasts of condition? The extremes of wealth and poverty, civilization and savagery, jostling each other—literally jostling each other—in the streets. However, a guide we must have, and we will take a printer, a skilled man in good employ—fifty-eight hours a week and a half-holiday on Saturday. He lives at Kennington or Islington. He travels to his work by a horse-drawn bus, wearing a morning coat and a tall hat. He takes his midday meal at a chop house—a plate of veal and ham and a pint of good beer, one shilling. When he married, and he was careful not to marry too young, he was getting forty-eight shillings a week, and they rented a six-roomed house for about thirty pounds a year. In those days they took a lodger to help with the rent. Now at three pounds a week, they have the whole house to themselves and their three children. Meat is sixpence a pound; they can dress themselves in good cloth and sound leather, the father for nine or ten pounds a year, the mother for six or seven pounds, and the children perhaps for two pounds each. He and his wife are really very comfortable. The father has a vote, and on election day he will march up to the polling place and give his vote in ringing tones, whereat half the crowd will cheer and the other half throw cabbage stalks at him. The children, you may be sure, go regularly to school; on Saturday afternoon the family take a steamer to Greenwich or Gravesend; on Sunday morning they all go to church or chapel while the joint is cooking at the baker's shop, and in the afternoon they walk in the Park, and have their friends

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to tea. After which they will practise hymns on the harmonium. On a whole holiday, they may give themselves a day at Brighton, three and sixpence there and back. Their annual fortnight will be spent at Margate, if they want to be jolly; Herne Bay or Littlehampton if they prefer to be quiet. You can pick them out for yourself in Frith's famous picture of Ramsgate sands.

So, you see, when statesmen stand up on the platform and talk of our unrivalled prosperity, when *The Times* writes of a state of contentment such as no other country in the world has ever known, this is what was in their mind: cheap food and regular work, the skilled man well fed and well housed; the farmer in the country; the village craftsman, the blacksmith or wheelwright: the grocer or the inn-keeper in the country town. In fact, one writer was so bold as to prophesy that soon we should all be so well fed and well employed, and well housed, that we should have to import Negroes and Chinese to do the dirty work. And do not forget, if a young man found himself cramped at home, there was always Australia, New Zealand, or Canada, calling for settlers and pioneers.

Our printer has a vote and always reads the debates in Parliament over his veal and ham. But politics do not trouble him very much; do not trouble anybody very much in 1860. On the main principles of policy Whigs and Tories agree with one another, and the printer agrees with both—Free Trade and peace, but a strong Navy in case the French get above themselves, as they are apt to do, but strict economy and low taxation: above all, leave the people alone. They know what is good for them and how to get it, by working hard and saving up.

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And where in the world will you find such workers, where will you find so many workers who own their houses and have money in the Savings Bank? Where are people so vigorous in mind and body? And as you went about with our printer and talked to his friends—the three-pounds-a-week families in a house of their own—what you would notice, the general tone of their conversation, would be pride, pride in one another, in the doings of Lancashire and Clydeside and the West Riding: the bridges built all over the world by our engineers, the railways laid and the mountains pierced by our labourers. And we had done it all ourselves, the printer will tell you, without any help from government.

We were, in fact, very well pleased with ourselves. And with good reason. There had been times, in the thirty years after Waterloo, when it looked as if we might collapse, times when sober-minded people thought that insurrection and even civil war were not far off. But all that was ancient history now. And the people who had profited most by the change were, I should say, the three-pound-a-week families. If you want a name for them, they are the respectable classes, and that word 'respectable' covers a great many virtues and one or two shortcomings. A Frenchman visiting our shores would probably think the printer's life unutterably dreary compared with life in a French town with its cafés and music and well-behaved crowds of working people strolling up and down. But in England people like the printer keep themselves to themselves: they know little of the world outside: they have not much sympathy with the class below, or with the swarming, drinking, fighting multitude, who never go to church or chapel and do not send their children to school.

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They are rather self-righteous: they are severe in their judgment on other people, especially those who have fallen behind in the race of life: like Tennyson's farmer, they are inclined to think 'the poor in a loomp is bad', and perhaps a little too much disposed to rate people by their success in making a good income. But being proud of themselves and conscious of their superiority to the mob, they are not jealous of those above them in rank and fortune. They enjoy the scenes of splendour when the Queen, for instance, goes to open Parliament and the streets are crowded with state carriages and powdered coachmen. They have a great regard for the Royal Family, which, after all, does its work and takes its holidays and brings up its children very much as they do themselves. The differences of wealth do not trouble them greatly. It is part of the magnificence of England that there should be families with £20,000, £50,000, £100,000 a year. When the printer and his family take a holiday, as likely as not they will visit Blenheim or Longleat or one of the great houses, they will be shown round the picture galleries, glass-houses, stables; and come away feeling what a great country England is, and what a fine thing it is to have a real aristocracy, and not be governed by greedy officials or politicians on the make.

We keep coming round to that sense of pride, and it is not only pride in our material achievements, our domestic comfort, and the industry which sustains them. Very likely our printer is a reading man: before he married he went to the Polytechnic and belonged to a Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society. He keeps up the habit of going to lectures, and the whole family will take part in a Penny Reading got up by the vicar in aid

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of the new ragged school for the children of the really poor. There Alice will recite Mr. Tennyson's 'May Queen', William will declaim Lord Macaulay's 'Relief of Londonderry', and the doctor will say something about Mr. Faraday's discoveries in electricity, or the new book everybody is talking about, Mr. Darwin's *Origin of Species*, followed by a few straight words on cleanliness and fresh air and the importance of good cooking. And we go home once more feeling that, whether it is science or poetry or history, our people lead the world. To be so small on the map, and yet count for so much among the nations—it really was rather wonderful. And, once more, we had done it all ourselves. We had a right to be proud. England was the greatest country in the world—no one doubted that: the richest, the most powerful, the most enlightened. But we were still on the upgrade, and every year we were getting richer and more powerful, more enlightened and more humane.

More enlightened and more humane? I wonder. I know there has been a great burst of social legislation, the Factory Act and the Health Act and the famous Education Minute of 1846; and the Metropolitan Board of Works has splendid plans for a Thames Embankment, and broad streets sweeping away the pestilential old rookeries. But still. One fine morning your business might take you into the City, and you would find the streets blocked by an enormous crowd, some fighting, more of them already drunk. They have come to see a man hanged in front of Newgate Prison, almost under the shadow of St. Paul's. Try Westminster. Within sight of the Houses of Parliament, there are streets where no decent person, except a doctor perhaps, or a Sister of

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Mercy, would venture. Even if no one threw a dead cat at you, or tried to tear the clothes off your back, the sights and the sounds and above all the smells would be enough to send you hurrying back. Try Deptford on a Saturday night. Under the glare of a gin palace a ring has formed to watch two women, stripped to the waist, fighting with broken bottles. Or take two villages within a mile or two of each other. One is a delight to the traveller, all spick and span and friendly. In another all is gaping walls and torn thatch, and if the people trouble to notice you at all, it is probably to call out a few bad words and send a rotten turnip after you.

Contrast everywhere, you see. Suppose, for instance, having seen the great house and its treasures, they charter a fly at the station and take a drive through the villages. All about them they will see fields and cattle which are the admiration of the world. Never had there been such harvests, such sheep, or such cows. The most jealous foreigner had to own that English agriculture was the first in the world, and still improving. There was not much machinery yet: labour was abundant and cheap, and on the road you might encounter a strange sight, a gang of Irishmen in rags and tatters, each with his sickle wrapped up in straw, who came over for the harvest and kept wages down. *The wages were low.* In Dorset, for example, thousands of families were living on a wage of eight or ten shillings a week, or even less. Of course, they had their garden and their harvest money, their cottage rent was only one shilling or one and sixpence a week: there was always help from the manor house when a baby was coming, and beef and blankets at Christmas time. And if the landowner lived on his estate and took a

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pride in it, the cottages were well built and comfortable, there was good water, and a school close at hand. The people may be poor, they are poor: but they are certainly respectable. If the landowner was an absentee, or a gambler, or if he was in debt, then the village was a dreary sight. No wonder the younger people are drifting away, some to the towns, the more venturesome to the Colonies. And if they go to the towns, what awaits them there? How long will they remain respectable? It really depends on three things—what work they get, what company they fall into, what lodgings they find. This is where the friendly society and the trade union are so useful, passing a man from lodge to lodge and helping him to find his feet. But if he does not find his feet, it is only too easy for him to go under altogether.

The great dividing line in 1860 is not rich and poor, but the respectable and the others. You may be rich, but if you are not respectable you will not pass muster in the eyes of society. The Queen will not have you at Court. Mothers will not let their daughters dance with you. On the other hand, you may be poor, but if you are respectable the world will think well of you. And what are the outward and visible signs of respectability? Well, by now I think you know: cleanliness—the children at school—sobriety (a pint of beer may pass, but the respectable man never enters a gin shop)—the benefit club—the family walk on a Sunday afternoon—the weekly magazine, like the *Weekly Welcome* or the *British Workman*. You can complete the tale yourselves.

And so, human nature being what it is, there is a certain amount of hypocrisy about it all. I expect the printer would rather slip off to a quiet game of bowls on a Sunday morning than be marched off to

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church: and I am not sure that what he heard on Sunday he lived up to on week-days. But he has ambitions for himself and his children, and he cannot afford to lose the reputation of being a thoroughly respectable man. It makes it easier to get the boys into a good trade, or for the girl perhaps to become a school-teacher. And at the printer's level, the family counts for everything. If there is one text in the Bible which they firmly believe, it is the one which says:

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

As you go downwards, the family, the home, counts for less and less, until it breaks up altogether. And when you got really familiar with England in 1860 and could find your way about yourself, the most lasting impression on your mind would be, I think, this division, this contrast, between the households where the children are cared for and those where they are left to shift for themselves: the ragamuffins we saw darting about under the horses' heads in a torn shirt and a pair of trousers worn down to the right length. They were the children of the underworld and will be the fathers and mothers of the underworld. Our printer is no politician, but he cannot help asking himself sometimes whether this is a sight to be proud of: whether something ought not to be done. Yes but what? This is a question to which 1860 had not found the answer.

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My Russian, now much corroded and never very exact or large, was at its best of an odd quality. Cut off from other Aids to Learning, I had to put myself through a course of commercial correspondence (with key), introducing our Mr. Bobchinsky to your good selves, and regretting that the last consignment was not as per sample. At the same time, I was with laborious delight conning my way through *Evgeny Onegin*. From the first stanza I had no doubt that here was the real thing, and my surrender was completed when I reached the forty-ninth stanza of the first chapter. Still, to my ear, it is one of the high feats of poetry. Seasons return, and ever and anon there comes on me the hour when I must go forth and spout:

The moon is up, and yet it is not night,
or
And azuring over gray-bell makes
Woodbanks and brakes wash wet like lakes,
or
Adriaticheskiya volny!
O Brenta, nyet, uvizhu vas!

And naturally I turned at once to see what Mr. Elton had made of it.¹ Here it is:

O, Adriatic waters surging,
And Brenta! I shall see you plain;
With inspiration fresh-emerging
Shall listen to your witching strain.

¹ *Evgeny Onegin* by A. S. Pushkin, translated by Oliver Elton (Pushkin Press)

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Apollo's progeny revere it;
On Albion's proud harp I hear it,
Familiar, like the sound of home;
And, steep in languor, I will roam
On gold Italian evenings, lying
In gondola, upon the tide,
A young Venetian by my side
Silent; or, when her tongue is flying,
The lady to my lips can teach
Petrarchan love, Petrarchan speech.

By itself, though I have better examples to quote, this stanza is enough to exhibit Mr. Elton's extraordinary skill in handling the complicated measure, enlaced with single and double rhymes, in which Pushkin chose to write; short waves of music, endlessly succeeding, some stopped, some whispering their way one syllable farther. And the line

Silent; or, when her tongue is flying,
recalls to my mind my first thoughts of Pushkin. What he actually wrote was

Sometimes chattering, sometimes silent.

And what struck me when I was alternating *Evgeny* with a promising assortment of light merinos, was just this—that the difference was not nearly so great as in other languages one is accustomed to find it: that the readjustment of attitude which one instinctively makes in passing from a Blue Book to an Epic was, in going from Russian prose to Pushkin, not necessary, or at least not nearly so noticeable. It puzzled me, and I put it down to my ignorance of the tongue in both kinds. I suppose, I said, I am making the language itself, with its lovely modulations and ample inflexions, more poetic than it really is, and, on the other hand, of course, I am missing a great deal of

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Pushkin's poetry. Well, that no doubt was true. But, afterwards, when I was back among books, and could read what the critics had to say, I found that I had really got hold of something distinctive in Russian poetry itself.

In a fine piece of criticism, which the Russians accept as true, Maurice Baring wrote:

Russian poetry does not only closely cling to the solid earth, but it is based on and saturated with sound common sense, with a curious matter-of-fact quality. And this common sense with which the greatest Russian Poet, Pushkin, is so thoroughly impregnated, is as foreign to German *Schwärmerei* as it is to French rhetoric, or the imaginative exuberance of England. . . . And although certain Russian poets adopted the paraphernalia and the machinery of Romanticism (largely owing to the influence of Byron), their true nature, their fundamental sense, keeps on breaking out. . . . What the Russian poets did . . . in a manner which gives them an unique place in the history of the world's literature, was to extract poetry from the daily life they saw round them, and to express it in forms of incomparable beauty. . . . [Pushkin's verse] is perfectly balanced, and it is this sense of balance and proportion, blent with a rooted common sense, which reminds the reader of Greek art, and gives one the impression that the poet is a classic, however much he may have employed the stock-in-trade of Romanticism.¹

Greek—yes. But reading the whole poem quickly through in Mr. Elton's translation, I could not help making another comparison: not with a Greek, but with a classic all the same: with our own great mistress of the matter-of-fact. I wish I could persuade myself he had read her. But the nearest I can get is that in 1831, when Pushkin was thirty-two, we find him asking a friend to send him Wordsworth,

¹ *Landmarks in Russian Literature* (Methuen, 1910)

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Shakespeare, Southey, and Crabbe. He was keenly interested in English literature: Southey evidently took his fancy greatly, and he began a translation of *The Excursion* (he did not get very far!). If that parcel had included *Mansfield Park* I believe he would have seen in the creator of Fanny and the Crawfords a kindred soul.

I am thinking now of the complete, the three-dimensional reality with which their characters, all composed of commonplace elements, stand individually out against their matter-of-fact background. And part of the fascination of *Evgeny* is to watch this gift battling, as it were, against the almost overwhelming influence of Byron.

You too, ye ladies young and pretty,
Whom dashing droshkies drive in state
Through the paved streets of our great city
St. Petersburg, at hours so late—
Evgeny dropt you. For employment,
Forsaking riotous enjoyment,
He shuts himself indoors, and then
With a great yawn, took up his pen.
He tried to write—was nauseated
By stiff hard work; no word could he
Bring from that pen—could never be
One of that quickly irritated
Guild, upon whom I must not pass
Judgment—I'm one of them, alas!

That, of course, is little more than a transcript from Don Juan: the ideas, the attitude, the idiom are the same. But then, when a true and deep passion is his theme, Byron must isolate his lovers, Juan and Haidee; somewhere in the Cyclades, we are told, but really in a wonderland out of space and time. Pushkin has no need to sublimate his world or create

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a fairyland. Tanya grows, and loves, quite as naturally, among pancakes, kvass,

much jam; eternal talk
Of cowsheds, rain, and flax in stalk,

and the whole apparatus of life as lived by the smaller Russian aristocracy in the days of serfdom, as Emma amongst the sweetbreads and gruel, muddy lanes, and borrowed umbrellas of Highbury.

Lo, from the nearest suburb bowling,
The Captain, leaving his command,
And all the county dames consoling,
The spinsters' idol, is at hand!
Hey, what a new sensation for us!
The regimental band and chorus!
The Colonel sent them, who but he?
It means—a ball! and happy we!
Already skip for joy the wenches . . .
But now the meal is served; and so,
In pairs, arms linkt, to dine they go.
The girls, round Tanya, crowd the benches;
The men throng, posted opposite;
All cross themselves, and buzz, and sit.

Quite so, and can you not hear Miss Bates and Mrs. Elton giving their divergent accounts of the scene next morning? And as he does his interiors, his conversation pieces, so Pushkin does his landscapes. It is a slight exaggeration of Maurice Baring's to say that he has only one flower, the rose, and only one bird, the nightingale, because there are certainly magpies in *Evgeny*.

That year the autumn was belated,
The weather held so long; and still
The world awaited winter, waited
For January to come; until,

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On the third night, fell snow. Awaking
Early, Tatyana saw it making
The courtyard and the roof-tree white,
And fence and flower-bed; saw the light
Ice-tracery on the panes, the cover
Of silver on the trees; the court
Gay with the magpies and their sport.
The hills, now softly laid all over,
Sparkled with winter's carpeting.
White, sharp, and clear was everything.

What economy of phrase, and epithet! And yet, how completely the whole scene is registered and rendered!

Is it our 'exuberant imagination' that makes it difficult for us to write like that, to poetize the matter-of-fact? But Chaucer could, and in the Nuns' Priest's Tale of Chantecleer, Dame Pertelote and the Fox is there not a touch of the Pushkin manner, the humorous mastery of the theme, the easy indication of background and atmosphere? And Crabbe, perhaps, in his ungainly, laboured way, shows a little of it sometimes. Or are we hampered by a certain solemnity of traditional form? Pushkin's metre is part of his inspiration: a longer line would have made the poem heavy, a less intricately woven stanza would have made it seem hurried, frivolous, even cheap. The story is very simple: Evgeny (whom I always see as the Baron Schweiter in Delacroix's picture) goes down into the country and is bored. His enthusiastic friend, Lensky, in love with Olga Larina, makes him acquainted with the family. Her sister, Tanya, falls passionately in love with him and writes the famous letter. But Evgeny is not made for domestic life, and tells her so. At the next ball he flirts with Olga, is called out by Lensky, and shoots

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him. Returning some years later to Russia he finds Tanya a great lady, wife of an exalted personage. She still loves him,

But I am another's, pledged; and I
To him stay constant, till I die.

That is all: but what, I think, remains with the reader is not so much the story or the characters as the nobility of the poetry. In Pushkin there is no trace (at least in *Evgeny* there is none) of that ill-conditioned schoolboy who sometimes steals Byron's pen. And can you think of any more certain proof of genius than this, that Pushkin, coming almost at the beginning of Russian literature, with no long history of trial and error behind him, no precedents, no criticism, should have been able to rise to, and sustain himself at, this level of ethical maturity and high poetic breeding?

1996 LOOKS AT 1946

It is, I think, a sound rule not to reprint occasional pieces on public themes, unless they are of some interest as documents for the history of opinion. Speculation as to the state of the world a hundred years hence, or even twenty-five years hence, has never attracted me, and the only Utopia I should care to inhabit is the most impossible of them all. But an exercise which I enjoy and practise is to project myself into the future, and from that standpoint to study my own time historically. So projected, I saw the landscape of 1946 dominated by one feature, the victorious expansion of the Soviet Union, threatening the entire extinction of all that we meant by freedom in the West. And I thought that the historian in 1996 might find it useful to have before him this terse record of what one Englishman—by no means unsympathetic towards the Russian people, by no means enamoured of the disorder that too often mates with freedom to breed misery—how such a one, and there were many of us, thought about it all.

I

ONE or two people, still living, may have spoken in their youth to a very old English lady, who, with her parents, had been 'detained' in France in 1803, and sent to a French school. She used to say that the atlas showed no frontiers in Europe, because no

one knew where the Emperor might be pleased to fix them next.

We are bidden not to be defeatist. Is it defeatist to acknowledge the truth that this war has ended in what all our other great wars have been fought to prevent—the overshadowing of Europe by one great military Power? Is it defeatist to recognise that we cannot buy our food? Anyhow, it is a fact.

It is also a fact that in the summer of 1940 we were quite alone, not particularly well-armed—and thoroughly happy. I have been reminded of a letter I wrote in the Dunkirk fortnight. 'Everybody doing the best he can, and everybody sure he is right—this is my idea of Heaven.'

Twice, I suppose, in our history, we have enjoyed and exercised what is called the moral leadership of Europe. Once was when we were at the head of the Protestant interest, and an Englishman could write:

As 'By the sword of the Lord and of Gideon' was sometime the cry of the people of Israel, so it might deservedly be the song of innumerable multitudes, yea, the emblem of some estates and dominions in the world, 'By the goodness of Almighty God, and his servant Elizabeth, we are.'

The other was in the nineteenth century, when we did not bother whether the Government of Moldavia was 'representative and democratic', but, quite crudely, divided the States of Europe into the Despotic Powers and the rest: when Lord Hawkesbury could write to Bonaparte that 'the King of England will make no concession to a foreign Power at the expense of the liberty of the Press'; when Lord John Russell's despatch in defence of Italian liberty was 'transcribed and wept over' from Palermo to Milan: and when Palmerston could say:

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Those who desire to see the principles of Liberty thrive and extend through the world should cherish with an almost religious veneration the prosperity and greatness of England, without being told that he was insulting Ruritania.

We were very crude. But then, this is a crude world: and the moral acrobatics with which it is sought to prove that Autocracy is a higher mode of Democracy, or that the blood-bath is a necessary incident in the evolution of political freedom, always remind me of the encounter between the philosophic Green and the crude Edinburgh grocer. The grocer asked him what his religion was, and Green began to expound the particular type of Hegelian unbelief then fashionable in Oxford. The grocer stopped him. 'I'm no asking you that, I'm asking are ye a jined member of ony Boady?'

Now, I have passed the greater part of my life, with considerable pride and self-satisfaction, as a 'jined' member of what I had always regarded as a very important and right-minded Boady: important, because, thanks to its insular security, its industry, and its sea-power, it could do, and say, and buy what it pleased: right-minded in that what it believed and did, made, on balance, very considerably for the comfort and cheerfulness of mankind. That its beliefs were crude, I have granted. It thought, for instance, that Habeas Corpus and that kind of thing were right, while Firing Parties and that kind of thing were wrong. And I find it very difficult to adapt myself to a moral climate where they are regarded not as better or worse but only different, and where I am constantly warned not to mention Habeas Corpus because the Firing Party is so sensitive.

But now that the frontier of the Firing Party

ranges from Stettin to Trieste or thereabouts, Habeas Corpus is beginning to look a little blue. I even have my own suspicions that if I were an aged Croatian or Bulgarian scholar caught writing these lines I might achieve unmerited eminence under the caption, 'Execution of a leading Fascist.'

That we are no longer so important as we used to be may be ruefully acknowledged. We did not look particularly important in June, 1940. But what mattered then was not what we looked but what we were: and that it seems to me is what matters to-day: what we are and what we believe in. I say to myself, suppose a liberal movement made itself felt in Central and Eastern Europe, on which side should we be found? Should we figure, once more, as the Great Exemplar? Or as the Lost Leader? I don't like quoting myself, but a few months ago I see I wrote these words, and I repeat them now because I think they have come true:

Between 'It is wrong but I can't help it so I shall say nothing' and 'I can't help it but it is wrong so I shall speak out' a prudent man may hesitate. But may we not hesitate too long, and so find ourselves as unprepared for peace as we were for war?

Are we prepared? In war-time there may have been good reasons for keeping silence. 'When a man is winning your war for you what do a few Poles matter?' But the policy of meekness and adulation has, I fear, brought us to the edge of a moral precipice:

Plus est quam vita salusque
quod perit: in totum mundi prosternitur aevum.

Is it too late to recover our path?

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'England always wins the last battle.' Suppose the hopes of the world are realised, will posterity say that we won the last war? It would be a great prize, the greatest that history has ever offered to statesmanship. Are we too meek, too timid, or just too tired to grasp it? Or is it that we no longer think such a prize worth winning? If that be so, then it would have been better for us if the Dunkirk fortnight had had another ending.

II

Years ago I was standing at Carfax contemplating the traffic. A dapper, grey-haired gentleman came up to me. He was, he said, a lawyer, a judge in Maryland, visiting the shrines of the Common Law. There was one still on his list—could I direct him? We walked down the High talking of Westminster and the Temple, through the College gates and into the hall, where 'now,' I said, 'you are standing on the very spot where Blackstone delivered the Commentaries.' He did not kneel and kiss the sacred ground, but I had a fancy that if I had not been there he would have.

This memory of long ago kept flitting across my mind while I was reading a recent debate on Foreign Affairs. We are just now in the transitional state between the Great Power which we once were, and the Great Commonwealth which, if we put our minds and hearts to it, we may be. But, if I were sitting now in Canada or New Zealand and contemplating the Homeland from afar, while I should hear much agitated talk at Westminster about the realism of Russia and the sensibilities of Russia, and the need to give Russia a strong frontier against Germany,

and the further need to provide the frontier with a glacis, and the glacis with a cordon, how often should I hear a voice raised to point out that what really matters is not the cordon or the glacis or even the strong frontier (if Germany is disarmed a bit of string would do), but the Law under which the people of the cordon and the glacis, yes, and of Germany, are henceforth to live?

From my imagined distance I can see in Europe two laws in spiritual conflict. There is the one which I, the Canadian, the New Zealander, and the man from Maryland, all acknowledge: the law by which my people have lived and died: which they brought from Westminster and the Temple and from Runnymede. And there is the other. But looking across the seas, and listening to those debates, I might find myself asking now 'By which Law does England abide?' I should feel, when Mr. Bevin said:

This is our view, and it is very dear to us: when men have fought with you, it is against our religion to let them down, that I was listening to the speech of an older time. But I should notice that all the cheers came from one side of the House, and that Mr. Bevin's own party seemed to be more concerned for Greeks—who threatened to treat British prisoners as war criminals—than for the Poles who had fought step by step with my own Canadians or my own New Zealanders from Alexandria to the Alps.

In the last century or so the Commonwealth has passed through two periods of strain. One was when, as happens in families, the younger members were growing up rather faster than the parents quite realized, or perhaps quite liked. We came through

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that all right, and the British North America Act set us on a right course. The second, and looking back I think it was more serious, was the time of revulsion from the rather showy and sordid imperialism of the South African venture. This, said the young Dominions, is not a way we care to follow. Again we recovered our path and moved, through peace and war, to the Statute of Westminster. But in all those hundred years, whatever our shortcomings might be, our imprudences and our misdoings, we stood at the head of the Lands of the Common Law. Where do we stand to-day?

An Imperial Conference is summoned: and if I were one of the delegates, that is the question on which I should like assurance. 'Is England,' I should say, 'still one of Us, or has she gone over to Them?' I should do my duty (I trust) on Committees about Air Training and Tariffs and Marriage Laws and all the rest of it, but in my heart I should feel that these things do not matter any more than cordons and glacis. And I should say, if I had the opportunity, something like this: 'You told us, and we believed, that the Second War was a war for liberty in Europe, not the sort of Liberty you put up statues or write odes to, but the liberty of not being pulled out of bed and made away with whenever it suits the convenience of those in authority. It was to prevent these untoward and disagreeable incidents that you, and we, following you, had built up a fabric of law and justice, which the nations once acknowledged to be the world's masterpiece of political wisdom.'

'Now we and you, standing together, have won that war. But have we won, have we given to others, the liberty for which we fought? The map of Europe, especially if the zones are clearly indicated, seems to

give the answer! Then what has happened? Was all your talk of liberty no more than the moral self-indulgence of a people so rich and powerful, and so safe, that they could afford to be cheaply good? Have you ceased to believe in it because you are no longer rich and powerful? Or is it only that you are afraid to talk about it because you are no longer safe? But we are not afraid.'

I might end by quoting certain passages on Blackmail from a once-famous minute of Sir Eyre Crowe. I might even recall what I wrote about Appeasement in 1936:

It means (I said) that our steps must conform to the pace, sometimes to the direction, of people we do not like, and do not trust. It is annoying: it is humiliating, but it is so. Therefore we must be clear in our own minds at what point we stop, at what point we depart. So only can we ensure that moral unity among ourselves which, if the last occasion comes, may be our salvation again, as, more than once or twice, it has been in the past.

THACKERAY

I AM not sure whether Mr. Gordon Ray is more to be commended or congratulated, now that his task¹ is finished. The collection of the material was an undertaking that required an uncommon endowment in perseverance: the editing, an equal allowance of industry and curiosity. And really, I think it leaves little more to be known, or said, of Thackeray; and the documents now published, or published in their entirety for the first time, are the most interesting and illuminating in the collection. So often is it the other way round! So often have the 'hitherto unprinted' turned out to be no more than the last ooings of an exhausted stream! Here and there, no doubt, a vigilant eye may note a faulty transcription: surely (701) Thackeray meant his young daughter's letters to be careful, *graceful*, and ladylike—not *grateful*. And though I have no doubt, since Mr. Ray says so, that Dickens did write to Masson on 9 May, 1851, I cannot find the letter in Mr. Dexter's collection, nor indeed the name of Masson. I am annoyed, because Thackeray's letter on the same occasion—a comparative review of the great rivals—is one of the most interesting from his hand. He was deep in *David Copperfield*, and his admiration, full, generous, and rightly directed, warms the heart. I should like to read the Dickens counterpiece.

¹ *The Letters and Private Papers of W. M. Thackeray*, collected and edited by Gordon N. Ray (Oxford)

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But by 1851 Thackeray could afford to be generous. He had won. After *Vanity Fair* no one could call him a mere reporter as the *Athenaeum* once did. He had climbed, shot, rather, to the top of the tree. He was a figure, the friend of great persons, and thoroughly enjoying it—but for that one black drop of discontent. The London of 1840, the year of his domestic catastrophe, was a dangerous place for young men, and if I were coming to Thackeray for the first time in these letters and diaries, by the end of the first volume I should be asking—will he strike out and find some firm ground under his feet, or will he sink? In the second volume he has reached the shore. He has made his place: he has found his platform: one might say, his pulpit. He is, with Dickens and Carlyle, the third great moralist of his time. And, what no one could have guessed from the letters only, bubbling and hiccupping with that fantastic-facetious which his generation so laboriously cultivated, he has achieved a style—and he knows it. Knows too that Dickens knows it, and is trimming his sails accordingly, is taking lessons from *Vanity Fair*. And the younger generation—Thackeray aged early—are looking towards him: Clough with his piercing eyes, and that 'Xtian Socialist' Kingsley. He really was a great man, and if he had been content to be that kind of great man, he would have been a happy man. But—one sees how Disraeli came by his portrait of St. Barbe in *Endymion*. It is not fair. Yet one cannot say it is altogether untrue. There was always the black drop.

The Third Moralist—and, in Charlotte Brontë's eyes, the greatest of them all. Certainly the dedication of *Jane Eyre* takes one back. 'The son of Imlah before the throned Kings . . . with a power as prophet-

like . . . an intellect profounder and more unique [alas] than his contemporaries have yet recognized . . . the first social regenerator of the day—the very master of that working corps who would restore to rectitude the warped system of things.’ One may indeed remember that, not long afterwards, some would say much the same of Ruskin. But of Thackeray? On the strength of *Vanity Fair* and *The Book of Snobs*? What does it all mean? And I think the answer—though I had not Thackeray in mind—lies in what I once wrote, generally, of that time. ‘England was poised on a double paradox: its practical ideals were at odds with its religious professions, and its religious belief was at issue with its intelligence.’ The letters now available show that Thackeray had thought his way into the paradox much more earnestly than I, at any rate, had realized. He was—or one might say there was in him—a deeply religious man: earnest (at times) in prayer, in his love (at all times) for the Saviour, in the hope of immortality. But he could not abide the evangelical orthodoxy of his mother, ‘so tender, so loving, so cruel’ (she is Helen Pendennis), to whom he writes in the very accent of Little Dorrit pleading with Mrs. Clennam. If she had lost her son, she would save his daughters: sending them to Pastor Monod’s discourses—‘mes enfants, fuyez le monde’, where sometimes Guizot might be seen, sitting in a corner and looking up the texts in his pocket-Bible. This almost Manichean horror of The World, and the hypocrisies and conventions it induced, were to Thackeray as abhorrent as they were to the generation growing up about him; the Arnoldians and Christian Socialists, who might have taken for their own watchword ‘Fun is good, Truth is better, Love is best of all’. As he had found: because it was

round his affections—for his children and his friends—that he rebuilt his broken life. And if once he went beyond affection, does it matter? We have heard enough of Mrs. Brookfield: and what more now appears will hardly stimulate fresh curiosity.

Certainly, in those early middle years there is so much that is fine and winning in the man, that prosperity comes as apt and welcome as if the volumes had been planned to show virtue rewarded and genius acknowledged. *Pendennis*, *The Newcomes*, *Esmond*, the famous *Lectures*—the circle grows, and admiration coins itself in gold. The fifties were a golden time: that other problem—the state of the nation—over which the moralists, his peers, could be so passionately vague or so vehemently obvious—had been, certainly not solved, but deferred. ‘I cannot’, he had written in 1848, ‘find the end of the question between property and labour. We want something almost equivalent to a Divine Person to settle it. I mean if ever there is to be an elucidation of the mystery it is to be solved by a preacher of such novelty and authority, as will awaken and convince mankind.’ In 1848—and I suppose there are not a few among us to-day who would maintain that in 1848 the Preacher came. But in the fifties, England was drifting happily and easily down the tideway of an unexampled prosperity, and Thackeray was drifting too. But, with a broken constitution, not easily and not happily. Certainly he was better understood, and to be understood is surely for a writer the one reward worth having. The grace of his style, the candour and clarity of his moral judgments, had given him that classic rank which Dickens never reached and to which George Eliot was to succeed. But, as Bagehot’s old lady said, ‘Mr. Thackeray is such an

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uncomfortable writer.' He was, but then he was an uncomfortable man.

It was an odd chance that led me to push Thackeray away and take up Spinoza. Still odder that the *Ethics* opened at these words:

He who desires to govern his appetite from a love of liberty alone, will strive as much as he can to know virtues and their causes, and to fill his mind with that joy which springs from a true knowledge of them.

Of Thackeray it may in truth be said that few men enjoyed virtue more. But Spinoza goes on:

Least of all will he desire to contemplate the vices of men, and to disparage men, or to delight in a false show of liberty.

And that is Thackeray too: the uncomfortable side that made his contemporaries uncomfortable, as if he knew something about them which he was just going to say. But if he had said it, would it have amounted to very much? Is it more than a 'false show of liberty' made acrid by a grievance—the grievance of a man who had won everything except the one thing he wanted, a fixed and assured place in society?

A WORD FOR GABRIEL HARVEY¹

MYTHS die hard, and a myth which has once formed round a minor figure in history may live for ever, because no one will take the trouble to dissolve it. Gabriel Harvey was a small personage in his life and might very well have been forgotten. But the literary historians will not leave him in oblivion. He has been labelled and laid up for reference. Harvey, G.: pedant: tried to make Spenser write the *Faerie Queene* in hexameters.

Todd started it. Hallam swallowed it. Kingsley gave it currency in a brilliant chapter of *Westward Ho!* It is repeated from one text-book to another.

Nor can the Muse defend
Her Son.

The University of Cambridge still believes it. In the Third Series of his *Studies in Literature*—a book full of learned pastime—Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch writes:

Examine the correspondence between Spenser and Gabriel Harvey and you will see how nearly the *Faerie Queene* came to be attempted in hexameters.

'I think, Sir, you will find it a good rule always to verify your references.' The correspondence is accessible: it was last reprinted in Professor de Selincourt's Oxford *Spenser*, 1912. And anyone who refers to it will find to his surprise, first, that there is no evidence that Spenser ever thought of writing the

¹ First published in *Life and Letters* (June 1930) and reprinted in *Twentieth Century Criticism* (Oxford).

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Faerie Queene in hexameters, and, second, that if he did, it was Harvey who laughed and bullied him out of his fancy. The proper entry would be: Harvey, G.: acute and independent critic; saved Spenser from wasting his time on classical metres.

The facts are so clear that it is at first sight difficult to understand how the legend ever grew up. The reproduction of classical metres in English is a quite legitimate pastime. There are Anglo-Saxon hexameters. There were plenty going about Cambridge in the days of Ascham. One pair was handed down for several years as a model.

All travellers do gladly report great praise of Ulysses
For that he knéw mǎny mén's mannér's and saw many
cities.

Harvey tried his hand, and suggested that Spenser should try his. Spenser, who was occupied with other models, Chaucer and du Bellay, declined. But Harvey discovered that the hexameter in English was not a serious metre; it was good enough for colloquial and satirical poetry, but not for an elevated theme. When he aspired to celebrate the Queen in Royal Cantos he followed Ariosto. When he wanted to satirize the Italianate Englishman—the stock theme of Elizabethan topical verse—he did it in hexameters.

French Camarick ruffs, deep with a whiteness, starched to
the purpose:

Delicate in speech, quaint in array, conceited in all points:
In all courtly guiles, a passing singular odd man.

Hexameters which are very much in the manner
of Clough at his liveliest:

Rome disappoints me much: I hardly as yet understand, but
Rubbishy seems the word that most exactly would suit it.

A WORD FOR GABRIEL HARVEY

Meanwhile Spenser had come under a new and more seductive influence. He had entered the Leicester House circle and succumbed to the fascination which Sidney seems to have exercised over every man, except Oxford, who came near him. Sidney was badly infected with the classical mania. He had lived in Paris: he spoke French to perfection; he may have known Baïf: he certainly knew about his experiments. At this time—in 1578 and 1579—while Spenser was working at the *Shepherd's Calendar*, Sidney was turning out hexameters, pentameters, asclepiads, and hendecasyllables by the hundred. Spenser was carried away and submitted the results of his new studies with some complacency to Harvey.

Harvey fell on them tooth and nail. He had scholarship to back his blows. He told Spenser that, unless he proposed to pronounce virginals, virjnalls, his iambics

Unhappy verse, the witness of my unhappy state
did not even scan. As for his *Epithalamion Thamesis*, he had tried the experiment and found that, with very little prompting, his young brother John could do that kind of thing just as well.

This is where Todd, a very dull man, went astray, and led a multitude after him. He published part of the correspondence, with his own deductions. Scott complained that he had not given the whole. If he had, the myth would never have come into existence. Scott, at any rate, knew a joke when he saw one, and Harvey's jokes were certainly not subtle.

Here are some of the hexameters which John Harvey produced between breakfast and dinner:

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While your barns are fat, while coffers stuffed with abundance,
Friends will abound: if barn wax bare, then adieu Sir, a God's
name.

See ye the doves? They feed and breed in gorgeous houses.
Scarce one dove doth love to remain in ruinous houses.

And here is Todd's scholium:

It is the production, it seems, of his pupil in this art of versifying: which however he transcribes with apparent ecstasy and complacently adds, in respect to the barbarous transformation and to other specimens of his disciple's rapid progress 'not passing a word or two corrected by me'.

Even Professor de Selincourt, who is fairer to Harvey than most critics, speaks of his 'enthusiastic praise' of Spenser's classical experiments. If this is praise! And this is not all. In another set Spenser is introduced in the Bishop of Rochester's garden addressing a laurel tree:

'What shall I call this tree? A laurel? O bonny laurel!
Needs to thy leaves must I bow my knees and vail my bonetto.
Who but thou the renown of prince and princely Poeta?
T'one for crown, for garland t'other thanketh Apollo.

Fifteen lines of this elicit an answering groan from the victim:

But what saith Daphne? Non omni dormio, worse luck.

It was rough fooling, but it was effective. Spenser wrote no more hexameters, and the *Epithalamion* was recast as the *Marriage of Thames and Medway*.

The oddest thing about the myth is this. Apart from his rather clumsy satire, Harvey stated his objections to classical scansion in English with perfect lucidity and seriousness. In the mass of bewilderment and borrowed erudition which make up the greater part of Mr. Gregory Smith's *Elizabethan*

Critical Essays, Harvey's few paragraphs are conspicuous for their good sense. The problem that was exercising Leicester House was the second syllable of *carpenter*. Dr. Drant's Rules, improved by Sidney, made it long. What was it, Spenser asks, in Harvey's Rules? Harvey's reply was conclusive. A syllable is as long or short as 'God and his English people' have made it. 'It is the vulgar and natural mother prosody that alone worketh the feat, as the only supreme founder and reformer of Position, Diphthong, Orthography or whatsoever else.'

If this is pedantry, a little more of it would be welcome in prosodic discussions. But poor Harvey can do nothing right. 'At Cambridge', Professor de Selincourt writes, 'Chaucer was widely read, but Harvey at least would not have regarded him as a fit poetic model.' Harvey adored Chaucer, and his 'brave fine sweet poetry'. And it ought always to be remembered that Harvey came safely through the hardest test that can be put to a critic who is also an unsuccessful author: he could appreciate his contemporaries. He was the first critic to notice that the peculiar grace of the Spenserian stanza lay in the final Alexandrine, and who else was prepared to see, in 1600, that Shakespeare was not only a best-seller but a poet to be taken seriously?

THE MAN WHO NOTICED¹

ELIZABETHAN drama—Jacobean architecture: Restoration Society—the Queen Anne manor-house: these are phrases that call up pictures. But the interval between the accession of Charles I and the return of his son is curiously uncertain in its outlines, unsteady in its perspective, overshadowed by the great conflict of Cavalier and Roundhead. And under that shadow—the storm gathering, bursting, clearing—what kind of lives were men and women living? Of what were they thinking and talking? On ‘the morrow after Twelf-day’, 1649, for example, when the incredible report was going about the country that the victorious army was not content with victory, that it was demanding vengeance also, vengeance on the Man of Blood?

That day a hunting party, Cavaliers all, met with their pack at the Grey Wethers, on the Marlborough downs.

... in a dusky evening [the stones] look like a flock of sheep: from whence they take their name: one might fancy it to have been the scene where the Giants fought with great stones against the Gods. 'Twas here that our game began and the chase led us (at length) through the village of Aubury into the closes there: where I was wonderfully surprised at the sight of those vast stones, of which I had never heard before, as also the mighty bank and graffe about it. I left my Company a while, entertaining myself with a more delightful

¹ A review of *John Aubrey and his Friends* by Anthony Powell (Eyre and Spottiswoode)

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indagation, and then (steered by the cry of the Hounds) I overtook the company and went with them to Kynnet where was a good Hunting dinner provided. Our Repast was cheerful, which being ended we remounted and beat over the Downs with our Greyhounds. In the afternoon's diversion I happened to see Wensditch, and an old camp and two or three sepulchres. The evening put a period to our sport and we returned to the Castle and Marlborough where we were nobly entertained; *juvat haec meminisse*. I think I am now the only surviving Gentleman of that company.

John Aubrey, whom this wonderful adventure befell, was then twenty-two. A delicate, sensitive boy, much bullied at school, and with a lifelong stammer, his best companion was his grandfather, Isaac Lyte, who still wore a dagger in the style of an Elizabethan gentleman; had been a friend of Carew Raleigh, Sir Walter's brother; had seen a neighbour's estate sucked into the design for Guiana; and could repeat the shepherds' prayer:

I pray to God and Saint Oswald,
To bring the sheep safe back to fold.

Isaac, too, had known old men whose memories went back to the Christmas shows in good King Harry's time, and had seen the illuminated manuscripts flying about the streets of Malmesbury like butterflies. John Aubrey had seen them, too, covering his school-books: he had heard the Rector say that for stopping a bung-hole there was nothing like old parchment, and it grieved him to hear it. And among them, who knows, there may have been manuscripts brought by Aldhelm from Canterbury and by Augustine from Rome. The Middle Ages were being swept away—to make room for the Royal Society. And for other things; because that Rector

was a kinsman of the famous Stump who had given the Abbey Church to the borough and kept the rest of the buildings for his woollen manufactures—the first great industrial figure in what was to be, for a long time to come, the great industrial region of Wiltshire.

So, by the regular course, to Oxford and the Middle Temple. Aubrey saw something of the excitement, the confusion, the discomfort of war; little of its hardship, none of its danger: but much of the fierce disputation that raged in colleges and the Inns of Court and kept the printing presses busier than they had ever been before: 'It was', he wrote in later life, 'an epidemick evil of that time, which I think now is growne out of fashion, as unmannerly and boyish.' Boyish is, perhaps, the best word that could be found, because the turmoil of mind through which England was passing about the mid-century is indeed very like the strain of adolescence, uncertain of its aims, unsure of itself, and for that reason all the fiercer in its assertions, the more passionate in its changing beliefs. From all which, indeed, Aubrey stood as far apart as a man well could. He seems to have been wholly without political or religious interest—to have made no more of the upheaval in which he was involved than of a turn of bad weather, troublesome enough while it lasted, but in no way interfering with his own proper business.

That business was to observe, to record, to keep things in memory which would otherwise be forgotten: to be, one might say, to the next age what old Isaac Lyte had been to his own young years. It puzzled him sometimes: he did not really care for the labour of antiquarianism. And yet he could not leave it alone. In easier, quieter times, he might have

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subsided into a Fellowship, and, with Trinity and the Bodleian for his background, have raided Oxfordshire and Berkshire, Wychwood and Braden, for their folklore and their heraldry, as Scott raided Liddesdale for its legends and its poetry. Scatter-brained and incoherent as he might be, Aubrey was a man of uncommon industry; and, with only a little order, a little system, much leisure and entire freedom, he might have laid the foundations of a school of Natural and Civil History, which our day would call Oecology. Industrious, and fertile: for it is worth remark how much that has later borne fruit in these studies first appears in some casual suggestion of Aubrey's. We had to wait a century and a half for the geological map which the new science required, and Wiltshire to-day has only just girded itself to the task of writing that county history which he projected in the year of the King's Restoration.

But after his father's death in 1652, leisure and freedom were the two things that Aubrey could not command. 'Lawsuits', Mr. Powell writes, 'beset him like a nightmare': the reader, trying to discover what they were all about, may end by wondering whether Aubrey himself quite knew: and the further complication of a love-suit with a lawsuit is as difficult to unravel as it must have been distracting to suffer. But distraction henceforth is the keynote of Aubrey's life, and the mark set on all his writings. His quick observation, his odd, happy, phrasing, his tenacious, if occasionally straying memory, his wide-ranging friendliness—with these gifts he made himself a figure in his world, and he remains a figure in the history of his time. And it is his friendliness, perhaps, that gives him his footing. The title-page of Mr. Powell's book reminds us that Aubrey is one of

a group, all bearing a touch at least of the same imprint. Standing by itself, his life would seem but a sad business, so promising, so ineffectual: but the care with which Mr. Powell has traced its ins and outs, its ups and downs, reveals a man who after all was very near the heart of the things that mattered in his day. He had the curious, delightful faculty of enlivening the minds of other men, of bringing out what was interesting in them; and the neat biographies of the Amici which Mr. Powell has furnished give a colour to his major theme, a setting in which his researches and discoveries slip, as it were, into their contemporary framework, and give the reader, who perhaps has hitherto been content to pass Aubrey as a gossip of genius, a view, as it appears on another title-page, 'of literature and literary men in Great Britain for near half a century during which he flourished'. Individually, the fame of some may have grown dim. We are not, to-day, much interested in the Number of the Beast. Still it is not given to many men to have numbered among their intimates ten denizens of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and to have struck sparks from them all: from Thomas Hobbes, Malmesburiensis: from Seth Ward, who in the judgment of that admirable critic, Charles II, could not preach a bad sermon: from that most remarkable man, William Petty, whose career in its variety recalls by turns a Renaissance adventurer and a Victorian inventor. And so, perhaps, Aubrey's one remembered work, the *Lives*, yields, after all, the best answer to the question, How did the men and women of the transition feel about it all? Add Herrick and George Herbert, Milton's first poems and the *Religio Medici*, add Harrington's *Oceana*:

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the interval grows less dim: and to go at once from the *Vulgar Errors* to Spratt's *History of the Royal Society* is to step from late twilight into early morning.

Aubrey belongs to both. He is a central personage in that transformation of English society lately analysed in Dr. Mathew's Ford Lectures. As Selden said of monarchy: 'There is this king and that king: there is no class of kings,' so it might be said of Caroline society more generally: there is this nobleman and that nobleman, this burgess and that burgess, this parson and that parson, but there is no class of parsons or burgesses or noblemen. One hierarchy is breaking up, and another is consolidating itself, just as one world-picture, Catholic, Ptolemaic; astrologic, a world where ghosts and witches are taken for granted, is dissolving and re-shaping into another: rationalist, Baconian, astronomic; where witches at least will soon be unthinkable, and Aubrey's *Miscellanies* will be set down under the category Mad. And across this shifting landscape he flits, noticing everything, so long as it is odd, and on the same terms, it might be thought, believing everything. But no—he has the true Baconian curiosity: he will make experiments and lay the results before the Royal Society; he studies fossils and analyses springs; he corresponds on botany with Ray; he is interested in canals as well as in fatalities; in echoes; in Brocken spectres seen on a foggy night in Wiltshire; in fish and fruit; in then and now, and the differences between them; in north and south, and the differences between them, too, as he travels between his birthplace in the deep enclosed country of North Wiltshire and the beloved farm of Broad Chalke under the spacious downs of Salisbury Plain.

He was a good draughtsman, too, with a notable eye for colour and wide landscapes, and, not less, for the antique garb of shepherds 'in long white cloak with a very deep cape, which comes halfway down their backs, made of the locks of the sheep. There was a sling, a scrip, their tarbox, a pipe or flute, and their dog'. But that was all gone. 'Since 1671, they are grown so luxurious as to neglect their ancient warm and useful fashion, and goe *à la mode*.' He notes, too, that in Surrey the shepherds keep their sheep in bounds with a half horn nailed to the end of a long staff with which they can hurl a stone. And he adds at once: 'Such I have seen in some old hangings, namely the King's, designed by Rafael de Urbino, and before the first edition of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*.' This aptitude for bringing things together, for flashing the light of his curiosity hither and thither, backwards and forwards, led him in *The Remains of Gentilism* to the verge at least of a great discovery, and one of which his successors have made good use—that our prehistoric ages could be illuminated and interpreted by the written records of the corresponding ages of antiquity, from Homer and the primitive rites handed down to us in Ovid's *Fasti*. 'Comparative antiquity' is the phrase he lets fall, to be the seed of yet another science.

It is pleasanter to linger in these places than to follow the luckless man, as his careful and affectionate biographer has to follow him, through the entanglements and quarrels, the abscondings and delitescences of his middle and later years: the long association, and angry parting, with the impossible Anthony Wood. But, be the distractions what they may, he is always noticing. Among his own people in the west, Aubrey is still the author, not of the *Lives*,

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but of the *Natural History of Wiltshire*, begun when he was thirty, and brought near to publication—but not quite, nothing with Aubrey was ever quite—when he was sixty. To them it comes with a sound of distant bells, and if an overworn epithet may for once be permitted, Mr. Powell is right in speaking of its nostalgic quality. It is home remembered by an exile and a fugitive: a debtor living on patronage and charity; discharging the burden of his recollections and garnering the harvest of his eye:

Things Praeternatural and the falling of rents. Architecture, agriculture, and the rise of the clothiers . . . the number of attorneys, the price of corn, and Salisbury races; markets, Roman coins, and gardens . . .

Close by on the same shelf stands the massive *Essay towards a Description of the North Division of Wiltshire*, Aubrey's scattered notes for the History which he left posterity to achieve. Happily in Canon Jackson he found an editor who, with knowledge equal to his own, possessed all the patience and all the exactness needed for the task, and enjoyed, moreover, that leisure and freedom which Aubrey could never compass. The outcome may be truly called a classic of English topography. But here, as in the *Natural History*, Aubrey shows himself a man of the incoming age. He might look back with a passing fondness to the retreat which monasteries had offered to minds like his own—or like Sir Thomas Browne's perhaps. But he knew that he belonged to the Moderns.

From the time of Erasmus till about twenty years ago [elsewhere he puts the dividing line at 1649] the learning was downright pedantry. The doctors in those days were but old

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boys, when quibbles past for wit even in their sermons. The gentry and burgesses had little learning of any kind, and their way of breeding their children was suitable to the rest.

The disdain of the Augustan for the barbarism of the recent past sounds clearly in these sentences—and yet it is Aubrey again who, as much as any man, first domiciled among us the new conception of Romance and therefore is, as Mr. Powell most truly says, a forerunner, though far off, of the Romantic Revival. Could anyone else have combined that part with a Fellowship of the Royal Society and the revival of experimental philosophy *ad mentem domini Baconi*? And where are we to place the Aubrey who had a fancy, since monasteries there were none here, to withdraw into a foreign house of the Society of Jesus, where ‘study they must, but what they have a mind to—musick, heraldry, chymistry’? There was ‘a pretty little Coll: of Novices in a pleasant place six miles from Dunkirk’, where he had a standing invitation to come and stay as long as he liked, and, since the differences of the Churches troubled him but little, ‘what better life could a man take?’ True, he would like to finish his perambulation of Wiltshire first, or—and off he flashes—he might take a colony to Maryland—two colonies indeed, one of rogues, one of ingenious artificers. He would be rich, he could be a prince. Meantime, for security from catchpolls, let his friends give out that he is beyond the sea in Italy, at Bologna. Poor Aubrey—he is only forty-five and has another twenty-four years to live, hunted, uprooted, his mind fluttering to pieces like the manuscripts of Malmesbury. That early memory is the very image of his life, and, though he loved Oxford well, it is in the place of memories that his worn-out body should have rested;

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by the 'tunable bells' of Broad Chalke, or, better still, where Bradenstoke looks over the 'rich green tuff-taffety vale to Cirencester, Malmesbury, Marshfield, Colerne, Mendip Hills. And Cotswold bounds the north horizon.'

THOMAS HARDY¹

I

THE movement of English poetry in the century which followed the appearance of *Lyrical Ballads* may be considered as a succession of three phases, each imparting something of its own character to the next. The poets of the mid-century, Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, were not less affected by the first Romantic group than, in their turn, Rossetti, Swinburne, and Morris were affected by their own immediate predecessors. But, as the century approached its end, the springs of poetry began to sink. A frailer and more deliberate art prevailed.

The poetry of the Nineties has a colour and a personality as unmistakable as the sonnet sequences of the last Elizabethan decade. Like them, it was much influenced by foreign examples: it aimed less at originality than accomplishment: and, like them, it could be very tedious. The accomplishment is undeniable. Almost at random—but the quality of this verse is so uniform that it is not easy to go wrong—I take some lines of John Davidson's:

As I came up from Dymchurch Wall,
I saw above the Downs' low crest
The crimson brands of sunset fall,
Flicker and fade from out the west.

¹ First published as an introduction to *Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy* (Macmillan, 1940)

THOMAS HARDY

Night sank: like flakes of silver fire
The stars in one great shower came down;
Shrill blew the wind; and shrill the wire
Rang out from Hythe to Romney town.

The darkly shining salt sea drops
Streamed as the waves clashed on the shore;
The beach, with all its organ stops
Pealing again, prolonged the roar.

That is the authentic singing voice of the Nineties.
But what is this?

Passing heaths, and the House of Long Sieging,
I neared the thin steeple
That tops the fair fane of Poore's olden
Episcopal see;

And still sadly onward I followed
That Highway the Icen,
Which trails its pale riband down Wessex
By lynchet and lea.

Along through the Stour-bordered Forum,
Where Legions had wayfared,
And where the slow river-face glasses
Its green canopy.

This ancient music? This gnarled and wintry
phrasing?

II

Poetry, let us never forget, is not an affair of the
great names only, of the one or two immortal lights.
They are only those who have done well what scores
of others were doing somehow.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

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Who, we may ask, but Tennyson could have written so in the Thirties? Well, when the spirit was upon her, Felicia Hemans could:

And then a glorious mountain-chain uprose,
Height above spiry height!
A soaring solitude of woods and snows,
All steep'd in golden light!

And is this not Shelley?

She kept her own immortal form,
And I came as the breezes soft and warm
Of which she breathed. I was a sigh
Within her heart, alternately
Coming and going.

No; it is John Banim.

In judging the poets, it is well, therefore, now and then, to take a view of the levels from which they rose, even though the exploration may lead us into those barren places of uninspired cravings and unaccomplished labours which memory rejects and history disdains to record. Never, I suppose, was there such an abundance of versifying as in Victorian England: and when we have turned over a hundred volumes bearing names which prolong a vicarious existence in the handbooks, there remains, untold, forgotten, the vast bulk of occasional verse, fugitive verse: anecdotal, descriptive, reflective, hortatory, hymnodic; never collected, never reprinted; magazine poetry, good enough to serve its weekly or monthly turn, and then fade briskly into oblivion: a casual exercise, an agreeable accomplishment, a serious relaxation. Much of Hardy's verse rises no higher.

The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing
Alive enough to have strength to die;
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing. . .

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Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

So Hardy wrote in 1867. So any young man who had read Browning and Swinburne might have written. It is a copy of verses, nothing more. His work was in the other harmony of prose.

III

Yet to this task, or relaxation, of verse, he brought one gift of rare and curious power. He was steeped in the ancient music of rural England, of song and dance, of psalm and hymn; of village choir and of harvest-home: and the example of William Barnes was there to show him what could be made of it. The musical inspiration, for example, of the verses quoted above is manifest.

When sycamore leaves wer a-spreadèn
Green-ruddy in hedges,
Beside the red dowst o' the ridges,
A-dried at Woak Hill;

I pack'd up my traps, all a-sheenèn
Wi' long years o' handlèn,
On dowsty red wheels ov a waggon,
To ride at Woak Hill.

Barnes, as Hardy said, was a spontaneous singer, but a deliberate artist, 'warbling his woodnotes with a watchful eye on the predetermined score', a scholar in many tongues. Hardy's cast of mind was different: his natural powers greater. But without the practice of Barnes before him, it may be doubted whether he would ever have achieved that singular

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purity of rhythm, that mingling of simplicity and subtlety, which, audible even in his earliest verses, grew with the years, and with increasing mastery of the instrument, into the lyrical triumphs of *The Dynasts*, where every measure, from the most trivial to the most august, is handled with equal aptness and assurance, while again and again the ear can catch, as so often in our native song, echoes of a still older music, borne on the hymns and carols of the Middle Ages, from Provence and far beyond.

We come; and learn as Time's disordered—deaf sands run
That Castlereagh's diplomacy has—wiled, waxed, won.

Companho, non posc mudar qu'eu—nom esfrei
De novellas qu'ai auzidas—e que vei.

In the wild October night-time, when the wind raved round
the land,
And the Back-sea met the Front-sea, and our doors were
blocked with sand.

Γλαῦχ', ὄρα, βαθὺς γὰρ ἤδη κύμασιν ταρασσάται
πόντος, ἀμφὶ δ' ἄκρα Γυρέων ὀρθὸν ἵσταται νέφος.

IV

But in the other matter of diction as opposed to music, we may lament that Hardy found no such exemplar. It is doing his fame no service to deny that, of all our writers, he can be, at times, the flattest and the most ungainly. And then, perhaps, we think of Egdon and the Vale of the Great Dairies, and remember, what so many have felt, that craving for Hardy which comes over the exile. The secret, what makes him, some may think, our greatest master in the old pastoral tradition, is the loving

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precision, the almost professional exactitude with which he specifies those sights—and still more those sounds—of the English landscape, of which we are most conscious when they are not there to be heard or seen. I use the word with intent: because never for long, in reading Hardy, can we escape the accent of a young architect drawing up a specification, and sometimes all the Muses hold their ears in pain. Here he succeeded to no tradition: he was imperfectly educated, cramped by a book-language which he could not shake himself free of, and writing it with a stilted and self-conscious clumsiness. Much of his dialogue is composed in this strained falsetto: much of his narrative savours of the local reporter bent on doing justice to his theme. His errors are not those of an untrained taste, feeling towards a style which will not come. They are errors of practice in following unfortunate models—prose translations of the classics, for example—without perceiving their imperfection. And what is true of his style may be repeated of his craftsmanship more generally: he never overcame his youthful addiction to melodrama: he never mastered the difference between strength and violence. Without the accompanying music of the pastoral theme, would *Tess* be tolerable?

V

With the publication of *Jude the Obscure* in 1895 Hardy, except for the slight fancy of *The Well-Beloved*, closed his career as a writer of prose fiction. His first volume of poems—many of them written at earlier dates—appeared three years later, when he was a man of fifty-eight. For the rest of his life, he

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wrote verse abundantly: the collected edition of his poems contains nearly a thousand pieces.

Hardy is as much a poet of place as Wordsworth or Cowper: but more than either of them he is a poet of local incident: of anecdote, tragic, humorous, or cynical: of such drama as an earlier age might have cast into a ballad, or his own time into a novelette. But he is a poet of reflection also, of reflection on memory: and, taken together, his verses are, to a greater degree than is perhaps common with poets, a commentary, an old man's commentary on a life that had not been happy, nor, till its later years, much honoured with discipleship or public renown. Here he turns inward: and there is trouble in his eyes.

As a young man, bred on the border-line between rustic commerce and rustic gentility, he had been socially sensitive: susceptible to the charm of grace and breeding, and a little vexed with himself, perhaps, that he was so. He wished to raise himself: he thought of taking Orders, and the Rev. Thomas Hardy exchanging pulpits with the Rev. Leslie Stephen is one of the more piquant might-have-beens of history. Mill and Huxley barred the way: he abode by his profession of architect, and discharged his ambitions in a boyish work, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, reminiscent, it would seem, at once of *Alton Locke* and *Maud*. His profession took him to Saint Juliot. And what happened there was what has happened and will happen from one generation to another. He fell in love with a girl with whom he was not intellectually in key. There was no open catastrophe: only the fire sank rapidly into vacancy and chill. But by some mysterious power Hardy was able to preserve, encysted as it were, this early passion in all its primal intensity; and so it came

about that some of the most poignant love-poems in our language were written by an old man out of his memories of forty years before.

VI

A common accident befalling an uncommon man will work out its consequences in uncommon ways. And that Hardy was a man of endowments bestowed on few, *The Dynasts* exists to prove. Not long ago, I had occasion to read it aloud all through, and at the end I thought how far back must one go to find its match in power and beauty? I paused for a while on *The Ring and the Book*: rather longer on *Don Juan*, and came to rest on the Third and Fourth Cantos of *Childe Harold*. Then other peaks showed through the mist: *Hyperion* and *Prometheus*; the closing chorus of *Hellas*; *Manfred* and *Cain*. It is from these heights, among the Titans who walk

With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
that this poet, I thought, must be viewed and judged. Titanism, or the spirit of revolt against an order felt to be unjust, first appears, I suppose, in English literature with Milton's Satan. Its strong resurgence in the early years of the last century is in large measure a political phenomenon, because an order which meant Sidmouth and Eldon at home, and the Holy Alliance abroad, was made to be revolted from. With the new Liberalism setting in victoriously after 1830, there was less call for an attitude which always edges perilously towards a mixture of self-pity and swelled head. But towards the middle of the century we see the spirit re-emerging quietly, gravely,

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ironically: defying nobody, denouncing nothing, simply disapproving.

We, in some unknown Power's employ,
Move on a rigorous line;
Can neither, when we will, enjoy,
Nor, when we will, resign.

Both in thought and manner that is not very far removed from Hardy, though it was written when he was a child of nine. And this of the same year is nearer still:

Eat, drink and play, and think that this is bliss:
There is no heaven but this;
There is no hell,
Save earth, which serves the purpose doubly well,
Seeing it visits still
With equallest apportionment of ill
Both good and bad alike, and brings to one same dust
The unjust and the just.

That is how young men—Arnold's pupils—were thinking in 1849, ten years before the great storm broke.

If I were asked what the total effect of Darwin, Mill, Huxley, and Herbert Spencer upon their age had been, I should answer somehow thus. They made it difficult, almost to impossibility, for their younger contemporaries to retain the notion of a transcendent, governing Providence. They forced the imagination of their time into a monistic habit of thought, of which *The Dynasts* is the great, and solitary, artistic record. To those who pass that way, the various devices with which believers of another sort reconcile Providence with Evil, or with Pain, will almost necessarily seem servile or sophistical. For them, there is nothing to reconcile: because to them,

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inherent in It, in the essence and operation of It,
abides

the intolerable antilogy
Of making figments feel.

The injustice of uncompensated pain, the darkening of our hours of happiness by the thought that they, too, are passing towards Nothing, round these two themes Pessimism revolves in a closed circle. Men of an abundant, active temperament will not often think of them: men absorbed in some intellectual pursuit have little time to think of them. But for the meditative man there is no escape, and no consolation, except perhaps in constraining his temper to such an indifference as the ancient philosophies, Stoic and Epicurean, inculcated. And who can be sure that this equanimity will be proof against all shocks, from without, or from within? Against pain, frustration, disappointment, wrong?

VII

Hardy's pessimism is primarily that of the disappointed man, who cannot find the serenity which naturally attends on satisfaction and achievement, and feels himself ill-adjusted to an ill-adjusted world. It is the vast projection of an inner discord, untuning the music of the spheres. And as we follow his work forward from his early pastoral time we become aware that his growing preoccupation with one mode of this ill-adjustment, the disharmony of the Human Pair, is an artistic danger: that if he cannot keep it at the tragic height of *The Return*, it will slide into propaganda.

The gods approve
The depth and not the tumult of the soul:

and, as we go on, this tumult seems to be growing louder; there is a shrillness in the voice that pronounces doom, a helpless magnification of the personal discord: and we may feel that unless the Titan returns to his native peak, he will merit the graceless jibe about the Village Atheist brooding over the Village Idiot.

To his native peak? Rather to his native vale.

'The choice,' he wrote of *The Dynasts*, 'the choice of such a subject was mainly due to three accidents of locality. It chanced that the writer was familiar with a part of England that lay within hail of the watering-place in which King George the Third had his favourite residence during the war with the first Napoleon, and where he was visited by ministers and others who bore the weight of English affairs on their more or less competent shoulders at that stressful time. Secondly, this district being also near the coast which had echoed with rumours of invasion in their intensest form while the descent threatened, was formerly animated by memories and traditions of the desperate military preparations for that contingency. Thirdly, the same countryside happened to be the birthplace of Nelson's flag captain at Trafalgar.'

Thus it was from incidents of place that he conceived the inspiration of his drama. In place, and music, was his strength. As in Attic tragedy, however far the tale may range, still it is fixed to a few familiar points: here at Colonus the blind and exiled king found rest: here on the Areopagus the ways of God to man were justified: and the war-worn seamen in the camp at Troy think of Sunium, as, by the side of his dying Commander, the Flag Captain thinks

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Thoughts all confused, my lord:—their needs on deck,
Your own sad state, and your unrivalled past;
Mixed up with flashes of old things afar—
Old childish things at home, down Wessex way,
In the snug village under Blackdon Hill
Where I was born. The tumbling stream, the garden,
The placid look of the grey dial there,
Marking unconsciously this bloody hour,
And the red apples on my father's trees,
Just now full ripe.

VIII

But the theme, whatever its starting point, gave him something which his own unaided imagination could not provide. What Wordsworth said of Goethe's poetry is true of Hardy's tragedy: it is not inevitable enough. It is not in the nature of things that Tess and Jude should come to their disastrous ends. They are led there by a series of prepared accidents for which their creator cannot convince us that the Immanent Will, and not Thomas Hardy, is responsible. If he is to persuade us that things happen so, he must, like the Greek tragedians, take a story where they did happen so, a real story, such as the Woe of Thebes and the Curse of Atreus were to those who saw them enacted on the stage.

The task, in fact, which Hardy set himself was to create a form in which the busy variety of Shakespearean History should harmonize with the austere and epic progress of an Aeschylean trilogy—its two or three actors, its well-spaced incidents, its long deliverances, its choric comment. 'Readers will readily discern', he said himself, 'that *The Dynasts* is intended simply for mental performance and not for the stage', and certainly he has left nothing undone

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to assist the reader's imagination, to keep it always at the right distance from the scene, and the scene always in focus. Here the professional exactitude of which I have spoken comes to his aid.

From high aloft, in the same July weather, and facing east, the vision swoops over the ocean and its coast-lines, from Cork Harbour on the extreme left, to Mondego Bay, Portugal, on the extreme right. Land's End and the Scilly Isles, Ushant and Cape Finisterre, are projecting features along the middle distance of the picture, and the English Channel recedes endwise as a tapering avenue near the centre.

DUMB SHOW

Four groups of moth-like transport ships are discovered silently skimming this wide liquid plain. The first group, to the right, is just vanishing behind Cape Mondego to enter Mondego Bay; the second, in the midst, has come out from Plymouth Sound, and is preparing to stand down Channel; the third is clearing St. Helen's point for the same course; and the fourth, much further up Channel, is obviously to follow on considerably in the rear of the two preceding. A south-east wind is blowing strong, and, according to the part of their course reached, they either sail direct with the wind on their larboard quarter, or labour forward by tacking in zigzags.

And he employs the same precision to bring forth 'the unapparent', to penetrate through the 'insistent substance', the atomies by which the drama must be enacted, to 'the thing signified', the immeasurable, impersonal Thing which sustains it.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*It is a moment when the steadiest pulse
Thuds pit-a-pat. The crisis shapes and nears
For Wellington as for his counter-chief.*

THOMAS HARDY

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*The hour is shaking him, unshakeable
As he may seem !*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Knows't not at this stale time
That shaken and unshaken are alike
But demonstrations from the Back of Things?
Must I again reveal It as It hauls
The halyards of the world ?*

A transparency as in earlier scenes again pervades the spectacle, and the ubiquitous urging of the Immanent Will becomes visualized. The web connecting all the apparently separate shapes includes WELLINGTON in its tissue with the rest, and shows him, like them, as acting while discovering his intention to act. By the lurid light the faces of every row, square, group, and column of men, French and English, wear the expression of people in a dream.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (tremulously)

*Yea, sire ; I see.
Disquiet me, pray, no more !*

The strange light passes, and the embattled hosts on the field seem to move independently as usual.

The result is that nowhere are we conscious of any unreality, or any hollow place. The whole piece, apparent and unapparent, is compact, coherent, and convincing. Given the initial surrender of the imagination which every work of art requires, this, we feel, in the world here displayed, is how things must happen.

IX

And what is this world? It is the same as that of the Tramp Woman, and the ill-motherings of Pydel Vale—perhaps Hardy's most tragic ballad—and a hundred personal pieces. It is a world of almost unimaginable contrasts, not reducible, yet, to any satisfying synthesis: and of these the greatest, the most insistent, the most oppressive, is the disproportion between the effort of the individual, his aspirations and intentions, his capacity for good or evil, joy or pain, and the silent impersonality of that Universe out of which he is mysteriously projected into a short consciousness, by which for a brief while he is sustained, and into which he is again and for ever absorbed. But Hardy has in many places expressly disclaimed both the pretensions of a philosopher and the name of pessimist. 'My alleged pessimism,' he wrote in the preface to *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, 'is in truth only "questionings" in the exploration of reality, and is the first step towards the soul's betterment, and the body's also.' Not indeed that even from this betterment much is to be hoped: only 'that pain to all upon the earth, tongued or dumb, shall be kept down to a minimum by loving-kindness, operating through scientific knowledge, and actuated by the modicum of free-will conjecturally possessed by organic life when the mighty necessitating forces—unconscious or other—that have "the balancing of the clouds" happen to be in equilibrium, which may or may not be often.' His pessimism, in other words, is not to be read as despair, but as a resigned waiting on events which he will never see, and which very likely will never come to

pass: especially on one event, transcending and transforming all the others, which he contemplates with wistful speculation: on the emergence of consciousness, or loving-kindness—a favourite word—in the necessitating forces themselves.

X

I have spoken of Hardy's lyrics as a commentary on his own life, a commentary redeemed from egoism by its obvious and intense sincerity, and rarely, if ever, sounding that note of self-pity which is so persistent in much Victorian poetry. But among them there is a group, *In Tenebris*, written about 1895, which seems to me to be an interpretation of the commentary, and to place Hardy, more exactly than anything else he has left, in relation to his contemporaries, and to the movement of poetic thought in his time.

It opens with a slow movement in a minor key.

'Percussus sum sicut foenum, et aruit cor meum.' Ps. ci.

Wintertime nighs;
But my bereavement-pain
It cannot bring again:
Twice no one dies.

Flower-petals flee;
But, since it once hath been,
No more that severing scene
Can harrow me.

Birds faint in dread:
I shall not lose old strength
In the lone frost's black length:
Strength long since fled!

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Leaves freeze to dun;
But friends can not turn cold
This season as of old
For him with none.

Tempests may scath;
But love can not make smart
Again this year his heart
Who no heart hath.

Black is night's cope;
But death will not appal
One who, past doubtings all,
Waits in unhope.

Note here the simplicity of the metrical structure, the perfect carrying-through of the stated theme; contrasted with this, the awkwardness in places of the diction, the obstinate choice—as it seems, for careless it is not—of the lifeless word

No more that severing scene
Can *harrow* me:

and the quality of the vision disclosed in the line

In the lone frost's *black* length.

With the gift, so widely diffused in the Victorian age, the power of bringing word and image together in one movement of the mind, Hardy was not abundantly endowed. Now and then his observation flowers into a sudden and exquisite perception as in the magnificent epithet

O the opal and the sapphire of that *wandering* western sea.

But for the most part his landscape is thought out, and must be thought again by the reader before the reader sees it, as he does not need to think when Tennyson, for example, takes up the poetic brush.

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'The lone frost's black length' is not a direct picture: it is, for all its brevity, a composition, and will hardly, perhaps, convey its full meaning till it has recalled the vivid blackness of hedge and covert seen against the snow.

In the second movement Hardy shifts, with a satirical intent which the metre at once discloses, to the high-spirited recitation-couplets of popular poetry.

Considerabam ad dexteram, et videbam; et non erat qui cognosceret me . . . Non est qui requirat animam meam.'
Ps. cxli.

When the clouds' swoln bosoms echo back the shouts of the
many and strong
That things are all as they best may be, save a few to be right
ere long,
And my eyes have not the vision in them to discern what to
these is so clear,
The blot seems straightway in me alone; one better he were
not here.

The stout upstanders say, All's well with us: ruers have
nought to rue!
And what the potent say so oft, can it fail to be somewhat true?
Breezily go they, breezily come; their dust smokes around
their career,
Till I think I am one born out of due time, who has no calling
here.

Their dawns bring lusty joys, it seems; their eves exul-
tance sweet;
Our times are blessed times, they cry: Life shapes it as is most
meet,
And nothing is much the matter; there are many smiles to a
tear;
Then what is the matter is I, I say. Why should such an one
be here? . . .

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Let him to whose ears the low-voiced Best seems stilled by
the clash of the First,
Who holds that if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full
look at the Worst,
Who feels that delight is a delicate growth cramped by
crookedness, custom, and fear,
Get him up and be gone as one shaped awry; he disturbs the
order here.

So much for Robert Browning, and Rabbi Ben Ezra,
and all who never doubt that clouds will break!

Near the end of his life he chose that line,

Who holds that if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full
look at the Worst,

as the watchword of his 'questionings': and perhaps the line before it hints at the secret of his private trouble. It does not matter: a child's sorrow over a dead bird can be as keen as a man's over a broken life, and remembered as long. The trouble was there, and it was not to be put by. Like his age, Hardy was growing tired: tired of compromise and conventions: of customs and conformities: but only in passive revolt. Still, now and then a note sounds, surely recalling an older voice, and the rebel of an earlier age. For three hundred years, as I have said elsewhere, what may be called our poetic attitude to the world was in the main Spenserian, and to Spenser, Donne, in his intellectualism and his rejection of the romantic lure, is the obvious antithesis. But not more obvious than Hardy. How Hardy might have written had he been born an Elizabethan, it is amusing to conjecture, if impossible to say. But how Donne might have written if he had been a younger contemporary of Meredith it is easier at least to guess.

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Yes; we'll wed, my little fay,
And you shall write you mine,
And in a villa chastely gray
We'll house, and sleep, and dine.
But those night-screened, divine,
Stolen trysts of heretofore,
We of choice ecstasies and fine
Shall know no more.

The formal faced cohue
Will then no more upbraid
With smiting smiles and whisperings two
Who have thrown less loves in shade.
We shall no more evade
The searching light of the sun,
Our game of passion will be played,
Our dreaming done.

But what to an Elizabethan could only be a turbulence of the spirit, to be atoned for at the right time by a passionate repentance, was to a Victorian, to a man living under the new cosmogony disclosed by science, no turbulence but a profound questioning and one that went down to the very roots of life, the springs of destiny. It is always the same contrast, but this time in its most intimate, haunting form: the vast power of Nature to create, and the impoverished, strained, conventional material which our social discipline has made for Nature to work on. It was the riddle of his day: not to be solved, only to be felt: only to be endured: in rare bright hours perhaps to be forgotten, and to be remembered the more keenly for that brief oblivion.

'Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est! Habitavi cum habitantibus Cedar; multum incola fuit anima mea.'
Ps. cxix.

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There have been times when I well might have passed and
the ending have come—
Points in my path when the dark might have stolen on me,
artless, unruing—
Ere I had learnt that the world was a welter of futile doing:
Such had been times when I well might have passed, and the
ending have come!

Say, on the noon when the half-sunny hours told that April
was nigh,
And I upgathered and cast forth the snow from the crocus-
border,
Fashioned and furbished the soil into a summer-seeming order,
Glowing in gladsome faith that I quickened the year thereby.

Or on that loneliest of eves when afar and benighted we stood,
She who upheld me and I, in the midmost of Egdon together,
Confident I in her watching and ward through the blackening
heather,
Deeming her matchless in might and with measureless scope
endued.

Or on that winter-wild night when, reclined by the chimney-
nook quoin,
Slowly a drowse overgat me, the smallest and feeblest of folk
there,
Weak from my baptism of pain; when at times and anon I
awoke there—
Heard of a world wheeling on, with no listing or longing to
join.

Even-then! while unweeting that vision could vex or that
knowledge could numb,
That sweets to the mouth in the belly are bitter, and tart,
and untoward,
Then, on some dim-coloured scene should my briefly raised
curtain have lowered,
Then might the Voice that is law have said 'Cease!' and
the ending have come.

But it does not come.

XI

Hardy was of no school and he created none. From the great procession of nineteenth-century poetry he stands aloof, a lonely figure, always observant, not ready of speech; rooted in his native soil, and responsive to every passing warmth, or bitterness, in the air; shrinking and stubborn, compassionate and austere. Here we shall not find the romantic gusto of Meredith or Browning, or the classic graces of Arnold and Tennyson; or the joyous energy with which William Morris created his happily ordered world. Often in reading Hardy, especially in reading the muted blank verse of *The Dynasts*, I have recalled the words in which he describes the Christmas mummers of his childhood, and 'the curiously hypnotizing impressiveness of their automatic style, that of persons who spoke by no will of their own'. At the end, it is to the simplicity, the unpretentious integrity, of Hardy's verse that those who have once caught the note find themselves returning. His poetry is all of a piece, the utterance, often harsh, often casual, of a mind that knows itself, that is content with no derived philosophy, seeing things as it must see them and speaking about them as it must speak. His style has not the natural grandeur of Wordsworth, to name the poet with whom his meditative habit of mind most closely associates him. Rather, its characterizing note is a certain impersonal dignity, such as we may still often find, in company with a surface clumsiness of manner and a tongue-tied difficulty of speech, in men of Hardy's country and Hardy's stock.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and the spirit

of the age may choose to speak, now in the accent of a rebel prince, as it did when Byron filled Europe with his voice, and now in the tone of an ageing man watching the fire die down, and thinking of old tunes, old memories: moments remembered at railway stations and lodging-houses; sunsets at the end of London streets, water coming over the weir, the rain on the downs. But what we hear is the voice of an age, of a generation carried beyond sight of its old landmarks, and gazing doubtfully down an illimitable vista, of cosmic changes endlessly proceeding, and ephemeral suffering endlessly to be renewed. Twilight was coming on: an evening chill was in the air.

Of that chill, that twilight, and all its memories of noontide gone, Hardy is the poet. But more is needed of a poet than that he should say acceptably what his own generation is most ready to hear, though that, doubtless, is needed too, if his voice is to be heard; and among the accomplished versifiers of his later time Hardy was listened to with respect rather than acclaim, and with little of such regard as incites to imitation. Nor is it enough that a poet should record for future ages the life and landscape of his day, as Shakespeare has preserved the shearing feasts of Cotswold, or Mistral the Provençal scene, unless like them he has the art to make the record a thing of poetic price itself. Besides this, what the world asks of its poets and what it remembers them by, is a certain mastery, as we may say, of the meaning of their time, and a certain power to bring this meaning—thought, and feeling about thought, and reflection upon feeling—home to other ages.

The volcanic inroads made by science and invention upon the ancient fields of life and belief in

Europe were, with us, for a long time masked, and partly concealed, by the tenacity with which we clung to our traditional institutions, the vigour with which we defended them from imminent, inevitable change; the attachment they inspired. We misread the Victorian age if we do not apprehend how deep, how intimate, and how sincere were the feelings that gathered round, and sustained, its customary life, its religion, and its domestic order. But a time will always come when custom, no longer needed as a defence against precipitate innovation, becomes a burden and an impediment. The adjustment is no longer instinctive but deliberate, and, being deliberate, brings with it a sense of uneasiness, of weariness, of resentment. And of all this Hardy is the poet too. This is what the Late Victorian age meant, this is what it stands for in the history of the English mind. Here we see with what presuppositions men of a good intelligence thought, what themes engaged their minds and stirred their sympathies, by what canons they judged of things: the pressure of custom, the breaking up of custom, the anxious view into a world where custom had dissolved: the craving, no longer for certitude of mind—that dream has gone—but for serenity of soul, not sovereign over circumstance, but at least in harmony with itself. And there we may leave the poet, as the darkness gathers about him and his world, wistfully speculating on an alliance, by means of ‘the interfusing effect of poetry’, between ‘religion, which must be retained unless the world is to perish’, and ‘complete rationality’, without which the world will also perish, and, for the last time, circling home to the place from which he had come, to the prayers, the music, and the very stones of the village church.

THE HEATHEN MEN

THERE have been times, in the last few years, when I have felt like a Saxon abbot who had just heard of the Battle of Hastings and was wondering, with some alarm but more curiosity, what would happen next. Curiosity, I think, would have prevailed, because, after all, those Normans were Christian men: they revered the Church and, in their daily life, they acknowledged, if they did not always observe, the standards and restraints which the Church upholds. There would be new counsellors, no doubt, at Westminster, Winchester, and Gloucester; new abbots, perhaps, at Malmesbury and Worcester; French lords for English lords, French sheriffs for English sheriffs in all the shires. But, before dipping my pen to make the new entry in the Abbey chronicle:

On Michaelmas Eve Earl William came to Pevensey:

I might have turned the pages backward and thought—no, this is not the same as in the days of Alfred and his children. These are not Heathen Men. Whatever else may happen England will still be part of Christendom. Alfred and Edward and the Lady of Mercia settled that.

Come down to our own day. Suppose the worst that in our darker moods we can picture actually befalls us; or, if you find it easier, imagine to yourself that our glorious ally, Marshal Stalin, and his faithful friend Corporal Hitler, having disposed of Poland, had crossed the Channel and partitioned England

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between them. Then we should have known what conquest by the Heathen Men really meant to those who were conquered. What it means to millions who, a few years ago, were also part of Christendom.

But—one writes that word with misgiving. We cannot pretend to ourselves that it keeps its old significance, and we should be doing ourselves and the world no good if we did pretend. Take the simplest form of Christian avowal, and ask—how many thoughtful men and women, here in England, there in Norway, there again in Italy, can pronounce it with heartfelt assent? The scientists, the critics, the anthropologists of the last age have done their work only too well. The once Sacred Book has lost its authority: the once Sacred Figure is receding into a mist of historic doubt: *et nubes suscepit Eum ab oculis eorum*. How much do we read and hear to-day of 'the infinite value of the human soul'! And what do those sounds mean in the ears of an age which, reluctantly it may be, yet irresistibly, is being drawn to think of the life of man as a momentary flash between darkness and darkness: of man, and perhaps of mankind? Round what symbol can it rally, under what ensign go out to meet the Heathen Men? In defence of what faith? In defiance of what disaster?

These are the thoughts and questions of a dark mood. Suppose, then, we lift into the clearer air which we hope another generation may enjoy and from there look back, seeing England and its state and circumstances at this mid-century as a theme for history. Of one thing we may be sure: that the proportions and values of things will be very different in the historic retrospect, many imposing causes will be seen as no better than false starts, while casual speculations, trivial experiments, will be recognized.

then as the springing points of great movements. It is always so. But as in a landscape each receding mile subdues the lesser particulars of shape and colour, but brings out more strongly the articulation of the whole, so I think it is possible to divine how the doubts and assurances, the checks and aspirations, the fears and the hopes, of our time and country will be mapped by the historic eye.

It will see the whole world living in apprehension of war, which to the Western world means conquest by the Heathen Men. It will see, over one vast area of the globe, those same men armed, disciplined, and confident, passing by that phase of free and gradual change on which the West had relied for the amelioration of the human stock: proclaiming a new objective and one which, in their reasoning, only world-conquest can achieve. That, beyond a doubt, will be the central feature, the *massif*, in the landscape which our historian will have to survey. But he, from his distance in time, will see and know what we can only guess, the price which humanity had to pay, in freedom, in personality, in mental integrity, in compassion, in all the old moral coinage of the West, for that tremendous effort by one among its tribes. And, setting the price and the achievement against each other, he will pronounce whether mankind is the happier for it all—whether there is less pain, less weariness, less fear: and better for it all—but, then, by what standards will he judge, will our children and grandchildren judge, of good and evil, for man and for human society? How long will the old coinage still be current money in the West?

Some things are clear even to ourselves. Material causes—the contraction of the globe, the pressure of population, the range and power of certain new

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agencies of destruction—have already imposed on the world a new set of necessities—the scientific necessity of order, the moral necessity of co-operation, the political necessity of direction. Answering these needs, we are aware of new assumptions coming to utterance—let anyone take a view of his own mental outfit in 1919, 1929, 1939, and to-day and then apply it to such themes as the surrender of sovereignty or the direction of labour: to State control, or delegated legislation. We have so far escaped, or evaded, revolution in the State. The revolution has been in our thoughts about the State. It has carried us very far. Is it carrying us into a new orbit? What can stay it? And in our passage to that untried world, what must we preserve?

The West would answer, Freedom: and the Christian West, Compassion. But in a world lying under the Three Necessities of which I have spoken, it is surely plain that the nature and range of freedom must be thought out afresh, just as the Christian idea of compassion was re-moulded first into philanthropy and later into the doctrine of Social Justice (I can imagine my historian lingering thoughtfully over a saying of William Temple's that Marxism was the last of the great Christian heresies). It is along those lines that we must think to-day, and where they meet we shall find the answer to our question—what is it that we have and the Heathen Men have not?

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